

Addresses ON Prophecy

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CONTENTS.

Influence of Prophetic Truth upon Character and Con- duct	3
God's Purpose in this Age	13
The Church of God	28
The Israel of God. I. Past.	42
do II. Future	56
do III. The Messianic Question	67
The Great Tribulation	89
The Millennium	104
The Future State	129

Influence of Prophetic Truth Upon Character and Conduct.

TEXT: "And when he had spoken unto me I was strengthened." (Daniel x:19).

That is the statement of Daniel as to the effect upon him of a prophetic communication. Daniel knowing as he says "from books" (probably from the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel), that the time for the deliverance of Israel from the Babylonian captivity was near at hand, set himself, by confession and prayer, confessing his sins and the sins of his people, and seeking the face of the Lord—to know more definitely the things concerning the future of Israel and he describes, in the words of the text, the effect upon himself of the revelation received. An angel was sent to enlighten him as to the subject about which he desired to know, and the effect of it was that he was strengthened. There was, then, a direct result, an effect upon the man himself.

Our theme then is, the influence upon character and conduct of prophetic truth.

Of course, I need not say that there is implied in the influence of any truth, the fact that it is really believed to be true. Daniel was strengthened by a prophetic communication. We may very well imagine that there might have stood by him a man with no faith in angels or angelic communications, with no faith in prophecy whatever, and with no understanding of prophecy, and he might have heard the same words which Daniel heard, and yet they might have produced no effect upon him at all; or at least, no other effect than to arouse a transitory and passing curiosity. He might have said: "Certainly I have seen a strange thing

to-day; a very singular looking personage, shining with a radiance such as I have never seen before, came to this Daniel, and said some words to him about these Jewish people which seemed to concern their future."

There is a great deal of the study of prophetic truth, and a great deal of the hearing of the exposition of prophetic truth which has no effect upon conduct or character, simply because it is heard or studied without faith. We bring to it a sort of vulgar curiosity. We desire to know what all these images, and beasts, and horns signify, believing in a way, that there is in them some unfolding of that which is to come to pass, if one can but hit upon the right interpretation: We may come to the study of prophetic truth with that mind and derive no profit whatever. It is therefore a believing understanding of prophetic truth which has an influence upon either character or conduct.

I have mentioned these two words, character and conduct. Perhaps it would be well to make a little explanation here. Character is what we are. Conduct is what we do. A great many people seem to think that reputation and character are identical things. That is not so. Reputation is what is said about us. Character is what we are. I believe that, in the long run, character and reputation and conduct will all harmonize. For a time our reputation may be better or may be worse than we deserve. Very severe things may be said about us. If we are right with God though, we need not mind that. We need not greatly concern ourselves about it, for in due time we shall be vindicated. On the other hand, we may be believed to be better than we are. Now, conduct in the long run, springs from character. A bad man does not habitually do good actions, nor a good man habitually do evil actions. We all know these things; they are very familiar to us.

There are three things which form, in the long run, character:

First, association. Our intimacies, our associations, perhaps more powerfully than any other influence, determine, in the long run, what we are. Of course, there is a sense in which our associations disclose what we now are. There is a vast deal of truth in the proverb: "Birds of a feather flock together."

A second formative influence, which we all recognize and will admit, is knowledge. What we know forms us; it is impossible for us to be affected as to our character by that of which we remain in ignorance, but we are moulded by our knowledges.

Third, it is expectation which forms us—that which we look forward to; a large element of hope or of fear, whichever it may be.

I think we shall all admit that these three things have more to do with the making us what we are than all other things put together.

I want you then to consider how these influences—association, knowledge and expectation—converge with all their shaping power upon the believing student of prophecy.

I. It is peculiarly the prophetic part of Scripture which brings us into intimacy with God.

Let me detain your thoughts just here for a moment. I say, it is the study of the prophetic truths; the receiving from God of the revelations concerning His future purposes in that which concerns us and the world, that brings us into a peculiar intimacy with God Himself. Christ says, "I have called you friends; I have not called you servants." What is the difference? What is the proof He gives of having placed us in the relationship of friends? This: "For all things that I have heard of my father, I have made known unto you." Friendship is an intimate relation, you see, and involves confidences. Abraham was called the friend of God, "And the Lord said: shall I hide from Abraham that which I do?" Now when God gives a prophecy, He takes

us into a wonderful personal intimacy. Let us, then, accept God's invitation to come unto these, His deepest counsels; to sit with Him in heavenly places while He unfolds to us the great secret of His majestic and amazing purposes. If we are ready to admit that there is a mighty influence in association, in intimacy; if we see that illustrated, and feel its effect in the human relationship in which we stand, need I argue for one moment that that part of the divine truth which brings us into the most intimate fellowship with Jehovah Himself must have the mightiest influence upon our character, and so ultimately upon our conduct?

I confess with shame that there was a time in my Christian life when I thought lightly of prophecy; when I said to myself, if not in words, at least in fact, "What has that to do with me? What I wish to know is how I may be saved; how I may get blessings; how I may get to heaven. Never mind what God intends to do with the Jewish people; never mind what His purposes are toward the world; He will in due time fulfill all these things. Why should I care particularly what He is going to do with Israel? I am not an Israelite." I say there was a time when that was my attitude toward the prophecies. Do you not see that I was actually refusing the most intimate fellowship with the Lord?

Suppose that in one of our families a father should say to his son or daughter: "Come with me apart, I wish to tell you what my great plan of life is; to tell you toward what all my endeavors tend, that which I purpose to achieve, that for which I am planning and shaping this and that event; and I wish to bring you into fellowship with me in these things." And suppose that child should say: "I don't care anything about that; it is not a matter that concerns me; all I care about is to know you in your character of a provider; I like to sit at your table and eat the good things which you have provided, and to know that you will continue to pro-

vide me with all the things of which I stand in need ; as to these purposes you talk about, I don't care anything about them ; they don't concern me." Dear friends, if that child thus shut out all the larger part of the father's mind, the father's purpose, and the father's thought from his life, how formative upon the character of that child could that father be? That is just what we do when we refuse to give attention to prophetic truth ; while, on the other hand, nothing brings us into such moulding intimacy with God as the believing study of prophecy.

II. Think, again how the knowledge acquired in this peculiar intimacy is inconceivably large and ennobling ; think what the prophetic student is occupied with ; think of the vastness of the subject with which the prophetic word deals ; think what a pageant that is which passes before the eye of the student of prophecy.

We open the pages of the prophetic word and we see passing before us the magnificent panorama of the future of the nations. Our God unfolds to us that which He is doing here and there in this world ; and not only that, He lifts the veil and shows us that which He is going to do in the future. Through the prophetic word, and through that alone, we look over into the great hereafter, and see that which is to be. We look into an open heaven with all its joys and glories—the goal of our own desire ; and we look into an open hell. All this is in the prophetic word. The mightiest subjects, the greatest thoughts that can possibly fill the mind are those with which the prophetic word is occupied. Think of it! We are permitted to see in prophecy the unfolding of God's majestic purposes as regards His ancient people. We are permitted to look to the end of our own age—the church age. We see the kingdom age unfolding beyond the church age. We are permitted to see the establishment upon this earth of an universal monarchy under the rule and reign of the Son of God Himself! Why,

dear friends, if it is possible for any kind of knowledge to lift us above ignoble things; to give us that breadth of vision and of thought which certainly are essential to all noble character, it is the prophetic word which will do it, and the prophetic word only.

III. I want you to think especially, if you will, how prophecy lays hold upon *expectation* as a moulding influence. Did you observe in your study of the Bible that more than three-fourths of prophecy is yet unfulfilled, and that there is absolutely nothing in all the purpose of God, as it unfolds itself in the prophetic word concerning the illimitable future, with which we who are Christians do not stand in some way connected?

Suppose we shut out from our hearts all that vast sum of expectation and hope, will you think for a moment how impoverished these Christian lives of ours must inevitably be? You know how we are influenced in the affairs of this life by that which we hope for. Take hope from a man and what is left to him? You can do nothing with him. It is impossible to get a noble effort out of him. On the contrary, the more hope you can put into his heart, the larger you make the man and all his desires.

These are the great truths with which God lays hold upon us, who are His children. He unfolds for us the magnificent future, and shows us our relation to that future, and then says in effect, now let that mould you here; let that react upon what you are now. He tell us, for example, that in the age to come we are to reign with Christ. Now if we believe that, the inevitable effect of it is to make us, first of all, think what is the kingly character; and as we think and meditate upon that, and get into our souls some conception of what it is to reign with Christ over this earth, there inevitably comes into the character something of the kingly. In the same way, when He tells us that we are priestly by office, how inevitably, if we believe it, do we begin to medi-

tate upon priestly position; and so there comes into our lives and characters the priestly element.

There is nothing in the future, except hell, to which the Christian has not a relation. Oh, think of it! Think what a vast field of thought is opened up in what we are told of heaven itself; of its occupations; of its inhabitants; of its duration; of the condition of life there, and of all those things at which we are looking. Suppose all these things were shut out at once from the formative influences which go to make up our characters,

In conclusion, permit me to dwell a few moments upon this question of hope. I do this because the Christian's hope is peculiarly the theme of New Testament prophecy.

First of all, what is the Christian's hope? I suppose a large number of my fellow believers would say: "That we may get to heaven at last; that we may find, when the book of life is opened, that our names are written there; that we may discover, before the great white throne, with wonder and rejoicing, that we are saved; that our sins have been forgiven." My brother, my sister, it would be impossible for you to find in Scripture one line, one syllable, which makes the believer's hope to be salvation. How often I have asked Christians if they are saved, and they have replied: "Well, I have a hope." It is a hope of an ultimate salvation! it is a hope that somehow everything may turn out all right at last; it is a hope that Christ may not let go, and that they may get to heaven at last. I repeat it, there is not a line of Scripture which makes salvation the believer's hope. Let me read you a passage from Titus: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared." (Titus ii:11.)

Dear friends, salvation is not away off yonder at the gates of heaven; salvation is at the cross. The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared, and it brings salvation all the way down to where the sinner is—right there. You know our Lord's own picture of it. It is the illustration to

which my mind recurs most instantly—that illustration of the good Samaritan. You know how beautifully that shadows out this blessed truth; that just as the good Samaritan went down the Jericho road and ministered to the wretch who lay there half dead, pouring oil into his wounds right there where he lay, just so the grace of God, that brings salvation, has come to the sinner in the place where he lies in his sins. No matter how great a sinner he may be, if he can be persuaded to turn the eye of faith toward the cross, there salvation comes.

“The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared,” says Paul, “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.” A saved sinner ought to live soberly, righteously and godly because he *is* saved. Scripture does not tell an ungodly man to live godly; it would be an impossibility. Then Paul goes on to say: “Looking for that blessed hope.” Ah, that is what we are after! Let us see what that “blessed hope” is. Is it salvation? Oh, no! “The grace of God that *bringeth* salvation *hath* appeared.” Looking for the godly life? The grace that saves us, teaches us to live godly. “Looking for that blessed hope and *the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*” That is the blessed hope, dear friends. Never, never does the Scripture point the believer toward heaven as the place where he is going to find out whether he is saved or not. In the 5th chapter of Romans there is a wonderful summing up of the results of grace. Let me read it: “Therefore, being justified by faith, we *have peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We are not hoping to have peace with God. If we have faith, we *are* justified and we *have* peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” Grace is unmerited favor. Where does the believer stand? In the undeserved, unmerited favor of

God. He does not deserve to be kept, but, blessed be God, he is kept. Then where does hope come in "and rejoice in the hope of the *glory of God?*" Not the salvation of God, but the glory of God. We find in Colossians that the glory of God is brought unto us at His appearing. The glorious appearing of the Lord is pointed to as the believer's hope. It is the first to be fulfilled of all the unfulfilled prophecies.

Suppose now you believe it. I don't know whether you do or not. But suppose you believe that Jesus meant what He said when He told us to "watch, for ye know not what hour our Lord doth come;" would it have no effect upon your character and conduct? Let me turn to Colossians for a moment, 3rd chapter:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

That is what we hope for. Well, you say, what has that to do with conduct or character; is not that a mere prophetic statement? May we not say, well I am glad that when He appears I shall appear with Him? Let me say here, dear friends, that there is not such a thing as an abstract doctrine in Scripture. There is not a proposition of truth which is not intended by Almighty God to have an influence upon conduct. We know, and believe, and expect we shall be like Him when He shall appear; that we shall see Him as He is, "and every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." True, the *doctrine* may have no effect upon us whatever; but it is really a *hope?* If it is a hope in the heart, then, according to the inspired word itself, that hope will be a purifying hope; it will lay hold upon conduct and character. Let me read James v:7-8:

"Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

You see how that hope, that expectation, is used as a basis for the exhortation of patience. In Philippians it is used again in another way. Take, for instance, this passage: "Let your moderation be known unto all men." Why? "For the Lord is at hand." Therefore be yielding, be moderate; let your moderation so characterize you that it shall be known to all men.

I am using these passages illustratively. What is true of this unfulfilled prophecy is true of all unfulfilled prophecy. It is designed powerfully to affect conduct and character. There is no declaration in the prophetic word which, if believed, will not begin to do its silent, effective work upon character, and then upon conduct. According to that which we believe and look for, so shall we be. Shall we then shut prophecy from out those formative influences which tend to shape our characters? Shall we shut out this whole body of divine truth which brings us into the closest intimacy with God, and which fills us with the holiest and happiest of expectations?



God's Purpose in this Age.

Whoever reads the Scriptures with any consecutiveness or attention cannot fail to perceive that in them may be traced a gradual unfolding of divine truth and purpose. Such a reader sees that nothing is told all at once, that nothing is done without preparation, without deliberation. Intimations go before revelations; types before anti-types; prophecies before fulfillment. "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear," is ever the divine method. God always has things to tell which we are not able to bear.

When this is understood, then it begins to be seen that there is a beautiful system in this gradualness of unfolding. The past is seen to fall into periods, marked off by distinct limits, and distinguishable period from period, by something peculiar to each. Thus it comes to be understood that there is the doctrine of the Ages, or Dispensations, in the Bible. The clear perception of this doctrine of the Ages marks a most important step in the progress of the student of the divine oracles. It has the same relation to the right understanding of the Scriptures that correct outline work has to map making. Every school boy knows that when the outline is right, the details—rivers, mountains, cities—come easily into their right relative positions; whereas, if the outline is wrong nothing fits, and the map is mere confusion.

Just so it is with the Bible; for lack of clearness at the point of the dispensational divisions the inevitable penalty is some degree of confusion everywhere. Not that much truth may not be apprehended—it may be—but the majestic and beautiful synthesis of truth is inevitably lost.

For this unfolding of truth and purpose by distinct stages, and according to a necessary order of progress, is one of the seals of God upon the whole book, marking it as His own.

Now I should be sorry to have you think that this doctrine of the Ages is a deep or secret thing, in the word of God. It is not. Not only is it directly taught in express terms, but these ages constitute the structural divisions of an orange.

For an example of the direct teaching, it may suffice to refer to one well-known passage in Ephesians:

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel" (Eph. iii:1-6).

Here, as you see, the Apostle gives the present period the significant title of "the dispensation of the grace of God," and refers to the past as "other ages." And not only so, but the very distinction of which I have been speaking, namely, that the Ages are an orderly arrangement of an ever unfolding purpose, is brought out in the fifth verse: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit." From Eph. ii:7 we learn that as the past has been divided into ages, so also is the future to be so divided.

It is a matter of deep regret that the direct teaching of the Word concerning the Ages is so often obscured by a lack of consistency in the translation. The word (*aion*, in its various forms) constantly used in the original to express these divisions, is, in our usually excellent Authorized Ver-

sion, sometimes translated "world." An illustration of this misleading mistranslation is twice repeated in Matt. xii:39, 40, "the harvest is the end of the world;" "So shall it be in the end of the world." In both cases the original word is the same translated "ages" in Ephesians ii:7, and Colossians i:26. In the first of these passages the translators could not very well say, "worlds to come," and yet, to be consistent with their rendering in the Matthew passages, they must have done so. The "harvest" of Matt. xiii. is at the end of the age, or dispensation. There is much "world" after that.*

As for the way in which these ages inhere in the very structure of Scripture itself, illustrations can scarcely be necessary. As you are aware, they are marked as to their beginning, by some new probation for man, as to their ending by some act of judgment—for man always fails at last. The age of innocence, for example, began with man under the probation of abstinence from the fruit of one tree; it ended in the judgment of the expulsion from Eden. The age of conscience, again began with man no longer innocent, but knowing good and evil, and under probation, therefore, to do good and eschew evil—and it ended in the judgment of the Flood.

But enough! every reader of the Bible knows how these judgments indicate the endings of distinct and differing periods; that they are the great lines of cleavage in the progressive revelation of God.

We have, then, to take account of this fact; to respect these distinctions which God Himself made, and neither to

*The passages which should be rendered age, or ages, are Matt. xii:32; xiii:22, 39, 40, 49; xxiv:3; xxviii:20; Mark iv:19; x:20; Luke xvi:8; xviii:30; xx:34, 35; Rom. xii:2; 1 Cor. i:20; ii:6, 8; iii:18; 2 Cor. iv:4; Gal. i:4; Eph. i:21; ii:7; vi:12; 1 Tim. vi:17; 2 Tim. iv:10; Titus ii:12; Heb. i:2; vi:3; xi:3; 1 Cor. ii:7; x:11; Heb. ix:26.

put asunder what God has joined together, nor join together what God has put asunder. If Christ says "the law and the prophets are until John;" if the Scriptures put Moses and law in one age, and Christ and grace in another, let us be very sure that we respect the divine arrangement. And if God has put a difference between this present age of grace in which He is calling out the church, and the age which is to follow, wherein He will set up His kingdom, let us respect that arrangement also. As we will not go back to Judaism because we are not of that age, so neither will we go forward into the kingdom age, seeking to imbibe its spirit, or to do its work. We will stand fast in our own age, striving by God's grace to do the work allotted to us, restfully leaving the consequences and the future to the God of the ages.

The question, then, of paramount importance to us is the question of the purpose of God in this age in which we live. In the degree in which we misapprehend this we shall fail, whatever our zeal, to do the thing God would have us do. Nay, the greater our zeal the more absolute and disastrous will be our failure. Nothing is more pathetic than the spectacle constantly repeated of a zeal, beautiful in its purity, and passionate in its devotedness, burning itself out in utter abandonment to a cause which is in no sense that of God.

Perhaps no better illustration of this can be found than the Crusaders. Beyond all question, the greater part of the thousands who streamed across the Hellespont in the endeavor to rescue the empty tomb of a risen Christ from the possession of the infidel, were actuated by an unselfish zeal; but no one who reads the Bible believes that their enterprise was in any Scriptural sense Christian. And the pitifulness of it is that one-tenth part of that lavish cost of life and treasure would have done, and done completely, the only specific thing laid upon this Age—namely, the evangelization of the world.

And yet, in no one of the dispensations, if we except the first, has the especial responsibility committed to man been so simple, so capable of statement in terms of transparent lucidity. Never, in any age, has there been so little excuse for mistake at this point. The man under law was set to the performance of a minute and laborious ritual, the validity of which depended upon exactness in every part. This was that yoke of the law which Paul said neither he nor his fathers were able to bear.

Likewise the kingdom age, which is to follow this, will have, for the man of God, the vast and complicated activities attending the administration of an universal kingdom.

But the saint of this dispensation is neither set to do a ritual, nor to bear rule over the kingdoms of this world.

What, then, is the purpose of God in this age, the execution of which is committed to us?

I. In Matthew xvi:18, Christ announced a purpose which, as Paul informs us in Eph. iii., involved the disclosure of a mystery which had been entirely hidden from past ages:—"I will build my CHURCH."

Now, my hearers, the KINGDOM was no mystery. The kingdom is the great theme of the prophets. From Isaiah to Malachi the burden of the prophetic testimony is the kingdom to be set up by the Messiah, David's great Son, but who was to be also "the mighty God, the Everlasting Father."

In the fulness of time John the Baptist first, and then the Christ, came preaching "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "But His own received Him not." Israel would not have her King "meek and lowly" (Zech. ix:9; Matt. xxi:1-5), and so, when His rejection by the bulk of the nation became manifest, the kingdom was postponed, and Christ announced the mystery, the Church.

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into it, and to show how the church differs from the kingdom. Let it suffice now to refer to one passage only, but a passage which proves conclusively that the church did not exist, could not have existed, before the ascension of Christ.

"According to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY" (Eph. i:19-23).

As you know, 1 Cor. xii:12, 13, tells us how this body is formed, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit uniting believers to the risen Head. The baptism of the Holy Spirit began on the day of Pentecost, and so, naturally enough, we find that from that day the Church is constantly in view: "the Lord added to the CHURCH daily such as should be saved." There were individual believers before Pentecost, of course, but any number of individual believers, even though associated under a common name, and observing ordinances, could not form the *church*. Only the baptism of the Holy Spirit uniting these *disjecta membra* into one living Body could do that.

Now the word selected by our Lord for the name of this new thing is singularly descriptive of what it is, of the process of its formation, and, hence, of the purpose of God in this age. The word is "ecclesia," and it means "the called out ones." The church is composed of called out people. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world" (John xvii:6). "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts xv:14).

II. There is not a passage, nor a line, of Scripture which intimates that the world is to be converted during this age.

It is the age of the called out ones. Paul says he was "made all things to all men if by all means he might gain

some," not "all." He declares that his apostleship was for "obedience of the faith *among* (not "of") all nations."

Nay, not Paul only, but the Lord also describes the whole course of this age in terms which exclude the possibility of a converted world during its continuance. The parable of the tares in Matt. xiii. declares in express terms that the children of the devil are to be mingled with the children of the kingdom until the end of the age. The *purpose* of God in this age, then, is the calling out of the church.

The *method* employed is the preaching of the glad tidings that Christ died on the cross, a vicarious offering, the saving merit of which avails for any who will believe on Him. The saving offer is made to all, and this is not in mockery but in good faith, as expressing the desire of God for the salvation of all.

The one commission with which we are invested is to proclaim that message to every creature, to baptize those who by receiving it become the disciples of Christ, and to instruct such baptized believers in all righteousness.

Our character as such heralds is that of ambassadors who are, in Christ's stead, to beseech sinners to be reconciled to God, proclaiming that Christ, the sinless One, has been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (Matt. xxviii:18-20; Mark xvi:15; Acts i:8; 2 Cor. v:18-21).

In perfect harmony with this program the Age began. The little flock called out by three years of our Lord's personal ministry were baptized with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, forming thus the beginning of the "ecclesia." In the fulness of the Spirit's power they began on that day their ambassadorship. Out of the vast throng gathered for the feast three thousand were converted. A glorious outcalling for His name, truly, but neither then nor on any subsequent occasion was *Jerusalem* converted. The entire Apostolate was gathered there, filled with the

Holy Spirit, and preaching a pure gospel in incorruptness, "the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following," but still *Jerusalem* was not converted. After a time the ambassadors were scattered abroad, and Philip went down to Samaria and "preached unto them." There was much joy in that city, and many were saved, but the city was not converted.

But I need not dwell upon the story of the apostolic church as it is told in the Acts, and gathered from the Epistles. In Antioch, Philippi, Athens, Rome—wherever the gospel was preached it proved to be the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed. To every believing hearer it was a savor of life unto life. But the number who believed was insignificant in comparison with the number who rejected and disbelieved. To them it was a savor of death unto death. Paul and the other ambassadors soon discovered that from some their message was "hid." The God of this world had blinded their minds. This mighty gospel, which had in it the power of God, which could instantly save the brutal jailer of Philippi, could, it was discovered, be rejected. It was foolishness to the Greek, a stumblingblock to the Jew.

In the great city of Corinth "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" were converted. And so it was everywhere. And so, my hearers, has it been ever since. This world, so far as we know, has never seen a converted city, or town, or even village.

Is the gospel then a failure? God forbid! The gospel never failed, can never fail. God's word by the gospel is accomplishing precisely the mission which was foreseen and foretold for it, that whereunto it was sent. And we must not forget, either, that the gospel will yet bring this world to Christ. It is not at all a question of the ultimate triumph of the blessed Lord. The heathen may rage and the people imagine vain things, but Jehovah will yet set His King on

His holy hill of Zion. Converted Israel, glorified saints, even a mighty angel shall yet proclaim the gospel, and "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. ii:2). "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi:9).

All this will surely come to pass, for the Lord hath spoken it—but not in this age. This is the age of the "ecclesia"—of the called out ones.

Let me just here refer you again to that great passage in the Acts which has been most aptly called "the divine program of this age and the next."

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, TO TAKE OUT OF THEM a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, after this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts xv:14-17).

Now let me ask, dear friends, what is God doing in this age of ours? Is it not precisely the thing spoken of in that fourteenth verse? Is He not taking out of the Gentiles a people? A few Jews are being converted, for Paul tells us there is always a remnant in Israel according to the election of grace (Rom. xi:5), but the great, the altogether vast majority of the Church is taken out of the Gentiles. This we all see. To believe this is not at all a matter of faith, but of observation simply. And I must again call attention to the words "take out." It is exactly what we see. Not, anywhere, the conversion of *all*, but everywhere, the taking out of *some*.

Now what, according to the prophet quoted by James, is to follow this out-taking? "After this I WILL RETURN," and then follows the conversion of the world.

The evangelization of the world, then, and not its conversion, is the mission committed to us. To do this, to preach the gospel unto the uttermost parts of the earth, to offer salvation to every creature, is our responsibility. It is the divinely appointed means for the calling out a people for His name, the church, the "Ecclesia."

You perceive why I have dwelt so long upon this one point. It is the key to the age. It is the point of our responsibility. So long as we persist in the error that to us is committed the conquest of the world, that it is our business to get the world converted, we shall devote to that purpose the resources in men and money which, in great part, ought to be used for evangelization.

I shall not soon forget the statement of a beloved brother upon this point. For years he had felt in his soul the call of the Spirit to evangelize the heathen; "But," said he, "I was a busy pastor in a large city full of unsaved men and women, and actually had upon my prayer-list more than a hundred names of persons who were habitual hearers of the gospel in my church. Whenever the dreadful condition of the unevangelized heathen would come before me, I would say to myself, 'I cannot leave L—— while so many remain out of Christ here at my very door.' At last it dawned upon me that every individual on my list had heard and rejected the gospel hundreds of times, and that my whole duty to them had been discharged years before. Then I devoted my remaining years to the work of evangelizing, not converting, the world."

Who does not know that our land is full of villages, each with from three to seven churches, where one faithful preacher could easily do the work of instructing the Christians there and of keeping complete the work of evangelization? The number of individuals in England and America who have not heard, in sufficient fulness to deprive them of excuse, the truth of the gospel is insignificant. The only

possible pretense for the concentration of so great a disproportion of heralds in the so-called Christian lands is that the mission of the church is the conversion of all the unsaved in those lands. Understand, it is not questioned that the nurture of believers, and the evangelization of the ever succeeding generations require the labors of many ministers. But it is insisted that the mission of the church is the evangelization of the world, and that this must not be suspended nor impeded while the vain effort is making to convert the entire populations of evangelized lands.

A country is evangelized when the gospel has been fully preached there. Two examples from the Scriptures must suffice upon this point. The first church ever gathered, that at Jerusalem, was scattered abroad by a persecution divinely permitted, as we believe, because in no other way could it be brought to take up Christ's world-embracing purpose. But was Jerusalem a converted city when that scattering below fell upon the church? Not at all; it was a thoroughly evangelized city. The other instance is Paul's statement in Romans xv:19-24.

Here he says that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel. When he wrote, his purpose was to go, by way of Rome, into Spain. Did Paul mean that in his missionary labors from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum he had brought those teeming populations to Christ? Not so; he had fully preached the gospel unto them. The result, to the glory of God and the joy of his faithful servants, was that everywhere some were saved.

III. It follows that the purpose of God in this age is not the establishment of the kingdom.

I have already said that the kingdom is the great theme of the prophets. They tell us in perfectly simple, unambiguous language how the kingdom is to be brought in, who is to be its ruler, and the extent and character of that rule, and

the result in the universal prevalence of peace and righteousness. We perceive at once that this kingdom is to regenerate society, to deal directly with economic questions, to concern itself with the temporal as well as with the eternal interests of man. Indeed, so far as the prophetic testimony goes, the temporal so predominates that, shocked by what seems to us a too material conception, we are fain to read into the prophets the spirituality which is the very atmosphere, so to speak, of the fourth Gospel, and of the Epistles.

If we had stopped just there, with the importation into the prophetic testimony of an exotic spirituality from the New Testament, the result might not have been fatally injurious; but, alas, nothing would suffice but the bringing of the Prophets bodily over into the Church age. This is the irremediable disaster which the wild allegorizing of Origen and his school has inflicted upon exegesis. The intermingling of church purpose with kingdom purpose palsied evangelization for thirteen hundred years, and is to-day the heavy clog upon the feet of them who preach the glad tidings.

See how inevitably so. The kingdom applies spiritual forces to the solution of material problems. How shall man live long and wisely? The kingdom is the answer. How shall exact justice be done in the earth? The kingdom provides for it. When shall human butchery cease in this blood-saturated earth? When the kingdom is set up. When shall creation give up to man her potential secrets? In the kingdom age. When shall the human intellect achieve her perfect liberty? When the kingdom comes. When shall the earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea? When the kingdom is here.

Of all these things the prophets are full. We turn to the New Testament and find what? The birth of the King, the heralding of the kingdom as "at hand," the announcement in the sermon on the Mount of the principles

of the kingdom, the utter refusal of Israel to receive her King, the passing of the kingdom into the mixed and veiled condition set forth in the seven parables of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, its full revelation being postponed till "the harvest," which is fixed definitely "at the end of this age" (Matt. xiii:39, 42). And then the kingdom being thus postponed, what is revealed as filling and occupying this age? THE CHURCH.

Passing on to the Acts, we see the church set up. Is this all? Is the church left to learn her mission and duty from the prophets? Ah, no. She is told that the prophets knew nothing whatever about her; that she was completely hidden from their vision (Eph. iii:1-10; Col. i:26). My hearers, how could the church learn her duty from a body of teachers who lived and died in utter ignorance that such a thing was ever to be.

No, with the bringing in of the new thing, the church, came a new body of revealed truth for her enlightenment and guidance. Following the establishment of the church in the Acts are twenty-one Epistles directly addressed to churches, or to Christians, filled with doctrine for their especial instruction. To these writings, then, we naturally turn when we would learn our calling and mission.

And what is that calling and mission? Is the church to take up the work of the rejected King, and to establish in the earth the kingdom? What, in a word, is the relation of the church to the world? Briefly this: to pass through it a pilgrim body of witnesses.

To quote Scripture upon a proposition so indisputable would be, where the New Testament is known, impertinent. The church is everywhere said to be heavenly in calling and destiny, and exhorted as pilgrim and stranger to walk in holy separation from the world which hated Christ and will hate the faithful disciple of Christ; her one mission, the preaching of a crucified Christ to a lost world.

Now here are these two things, the kingdom which is the rule of Christ over the earth, redressing every wrong, establishing every right, and raising humanity to the highest ideal of social order; and the church, a body called out from the world, and having toward it the one mission of heralding everywhere the glad tidings of salvation through the blood of the cross; watching, meanwhile, and waiting for the coming of the King to set up the glorious kingdom. What confusion, what perversion, what inevitable failure, what a false and indefensible exegesis seeks to turn aside the church from her true mission, to the impossible task of establishing the kingdom in the absence of the King.

That the preaching of the gospel produces everywhere many of the kingdom conditions is blessedly true. Where the gospel and an open Bible go, the humanities and ameliorations which are to have their full fruition in the kingdom age spring up. Even the unconverted acknowledge the new ethical ideal, and there is an immense quickening of the higher powers of man. These are gracious and beautiful results in which we may legitimately rejoice. They are vindications of the truth of our blessed faith.

But what we need to guard ourselves against is the notion—now, alas! all but universally prevalent—that these results are the chief object and end of our mission; that we are sent into the world to civilize it. No, my hearers, these are its incidentals. It appears that the sick in Jerusalem were healed when the shadow of Peter fell upon them as he walked the streets, but Peter, my friends, was not walking the streets for the purpose of casting that beneficent shadow; he was going and coming in the work of his apostleship. Suppose he had turned aside to this business of shadow making? Who doubts that very speedily the shadow would have lost its power?

IV. It follows from what has been adduced that the true mission of the church is not the reformation of society.

It has been truly said that the good is a great enemy of the best. No one questions that reform work is good, when wisely directed. It seeks noble ends, and with this we all are in sympathy. All this is not in question.

The one and sufficient objection is that it is turning aside from the work given us to do. The world, my friends, was full of the very evils which afflict society to-day when Jesus Christ was on earth. Slavery, in its most odious form; drunkenness an universal blight and curse; the social evil not even disgraceful. Did Jesus organize great reform agencies? anti-slavery societies, temperance societies, personal purity societies? He organized nothing. What He did was to provide for the organization of one society—the church; and to commission her to preach, not reformation but regeneration.

It often seems to men that Christ's way is circuitous and slow; that we shall accomplish much more, and that more rapidly, by some other means. Not so. The prayer, and faith, and personal effort and self-sacrifice, and money invested in any one of the great reform movements would have evangelized the earth.

And, be it remembered, what Christ did not do the Apostles did not do. Not one of them was a reformer.

This, then, is our mission, to preach the gospel to every creature. This, then, is the purpose of God in this age—to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name, the Church, the ecclesia, the called out ones. Here we stand fast. We will not attempt in this age the work which God has reserved for the next.



The Church of God.

"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi:18).

You will remember that Jesus, when he came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, asked the disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" And they said, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias or one of the prophets." You will remember there was a promise by Malachi, the prophet, that Elijah should come before the great and terrible day of the Lord; so some were saying, this surely must be Elijah; some were saying it is John the Baptist come to life again; others were saying it is Jeremiah or one of the prophets.

Remember, we are well on in the ministry of the Lord Jesus now. There was coming into His teaching the shadow of the cross. Already it was evident that Israel had rejected the kingdom, and His testimony was taking on more and more the tone and coloring of the stern prophetic testimony of Jeremiah and the Old Testament prophets.

After the apostles had answered Him, he put to them the personal question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Notice the answer:

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him: Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee."

Thus Christ approved the quality of Peter's faith. He was not merely expressing an opinion, echoing statements which he had heard, but was witnessing to a divine revelation—that of the Father in heaven. It is true, indeed, that for a whole year (that which is commonly called the "year

of public favor") vast multitudes were thronging after Christ, yet there was really in most of them no heartfelt faith. They were seeing the miracles He was doing, and were saying, "Surely this must be the Messiah; we shall see after a while; it will develop; meanwhile, we think He is the Christ." He was distinguishing Peter from that class of believers. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." It was a true spiritual conception; it was a heartfelt belief produced by the revelation of God. Jesus was revealed to Peter through the power of God as the Christ. It was a true faith produced by the power of God, and not a mere conviction arising out of evidence or reasoning, or the sway of human opinion at the time.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

It was with some hesitation that I resolved to make this particular text our point of departure, and my hesitation grew out of this fear: that straightway, the minds would go off upon the question of what Christ meant by the rock. I did not select the passage for the purpose of expounding that part of it, though I will say that I utterly reject the Roman Catholic view that He intended to build His church upon a Papacy, beginning with Peter. I do not find this here, neither do I find it anywhere else. If I found it in the Word of God, I would believe it, but I do not find it there; therefore, whatever may be the meaning of this passage, that opinion does not seem to be tenable. As you know, there is a little play upon words here. Literally what our Lord said was this: "Thou art Petros"—a fragment of rock—"and upon this rock—petra—I will found my church." You may take it in either one of two ways, and it will not harm you; you may believe either that by the "rock" He meant Himself (and that would

be in harmony with great numbers of passages in the prophets, and in the Psalms, and in the Epistles) or you may take it that by the "rock" he meant the confession which Peter had just uttered: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

What I desire you to notice particularly, though, is that we have here the first mention in the Word of God of the church. You may begin at Genesis to look for the church, and you may turn over page after page and chapter after chapter, and read verse after verse, and you will never find the church mentioned until you come to this verse.

Remember that when our Lord uttered these words, He was well on in His earthly ministry. He had been sending out heralds to preach, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He had been offering Himself to Israel, according to the prophets, as the King foretold, and now, when it is perfectly evident, that, nationally, Israel is not going to receive Him as the king, He utters for the first time the word church. "Upon this rock I will build my church."

I. I believe we have two things settled for us by this passage alone. First of all the church was not then in existence. Our Lord did not say, "upon this rock I *have* been building the church through all past ages," nor did He say, "Upon this rock I *am* building my church," but He points forward and says "Upon this rock I *will* build my church." The church then, was, when Christ spoke, still a thing in the prophetic purpose of God, but not yet in existence. He announces an intention to build, and He was soon to lay the foundation in His death and resurrection. Meanwhile, He Himself quarried out the first stones, and had them ready for the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. This is a very essential part of Bible truth; the church is not an Old Testament institution, but is a very distinct body of believers, having a distinct mission, a definite point of beginning and a definite point of ending. It begins in the

second chapter of the Acts, and ends (prophetically) in the fourth chapter of First Thessalonians.

In further proof of this fact read only one additional passage: Ephesians iii:1-10.

"For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in a few words whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel; whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

In other words, the Apostle Paul distinctly tells us that the church was a mystery hid in God in all the ages and dispensations which went before, but now is revealed; a statement which harmonizes with Christ's words speaking of His church as yet future: "Upon this rock I *will* build my church."

I suppose it is a general impression that all good people, in all ages—past, present and future—make up the church, and that heaven is to be composed, as regard its inhabitants, at least, of angels and church members.

Now, if we are having some difficulty in receiving this truth from the Lord Jesus and from the Apostle Paul, that the church is a new thing which was never in existence until Pentecost, it may help us to re-

member that there was a time, for instance, when there were no Hebrews. Abram was the first Hebrew. There were no Israelites until after Jacob. But what, then, of Adam, and Abel, and Seth, and Enoch, and Noah and Job? These men were all men of God; they were saints in the true sense of the word, and yet it is perfectly evident that they did not belong to Israel, for there was no Israel for them to belong to at that time. Neither did they belong to the church, because there was no church at that time. After these men had passed through this earthly scene, and had been received into the presence of God, and into their eternal rest, there came the development of a new thing in God's dealing with earth, namely, Israel. That is clear enough. Now we need only to see that after Israel had run its course, God brought out of His storehouse another new thing, the church. Why should we suppose then that all good people through all ages, were members, and are members, of the church? As a matter of fact they were nothing of the kind.

But our very text furnishes a conclusive reason why the saints of past dispensations do not belong to the particular body of saved ones called the church. The testimony upon which the church is gathered is that Jesus is the Christ. (See 1 John v:1.)

II. Now let us look at this word "church" a little, and try to find out what this body is which had its beginning after the words of our Lord were uttered. There is in the Greek language a word, kalleo, which means "I call," and another, ek, meaning "out of." Put them together, ekkalleo, "I call out of," and you have the essentials of the word used some 350 times in the New Testament, and translated "church"—the called out ones. The church is made up of those who are "called out" by the preaching of the gospel. The word, in itself, is an ordinary Greek word and is used in scripture for other assemblies than the church. For

instance, the turbulent assembly at Ephesus, Acts xix:32, 39, is called an "ekklesia." It was an assembly called out of the people of Ephesus. So Israel in the wilderness is called a church, Acts vii:38. This word, however, in the ordinary scripture use of it, applies to the called out ones since the day of Pentecost. It means the whole body of the saved ones in this dispensation or age, and in that sense I shall use it.

Let us inquire of scripture, first of all what the church is in the purpose of God? We know, alas! too well, what it has become, but let us get the divine design concerning it. I believe, that the church has gone very far away from the divine thought and the divine purpose. When I say the church, I mean the body of the saved; I am not speaking in any sectarian or narrow sense. We must find out what the primary purpose of God was in the calling out of this church. He had a distinct purpose in calling out Israel. We shall find that He had another distinct purpose in the calling out of this body called the church.

First of all: the church is the body of Christ—an expression that has its difficulties, of course, but let us look at it (Ephesians i:17 to 23):

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places; far above all principality and power and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, *which is his body*, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

I would like to give the remainder of my time to the

exposition of this long statement, each item of which is exceedingly precious, but let me take these ideas: There was necessary the incarnation of the Son of God, the death of the Son of God, the resurrection of the Son of God and the exaltation of the Son of God to the right hand of the Father before he did, or could have given him to be the head over all things to the church; therefore, there could not have been any church before that time. He raised him to his own right hand and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body. The church, therefore, could not have been in existence before there was a head. It is not like God to make headless things.

In 1 Corinthians xii:12, 13 we are told how this body is constituted:

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body whether we be Jews or Gentiles; whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

It was the baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to the doctrine of the xii. of First Corinthians, which brought individual believers together into one body. The baptism of the Holy Spirit then is the second condition for the existence of the church. There cannot be a church, first of all, without a head; nor, secondly, without the baptism of the Holy Spirit which began at Pentecost; therefore we say that the church began with the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and since then all who have believed from the heart, believed sincerely and really, in the evangelical sense of the word, that Jesus is the Christ, have been, by the Spirit baptized into that body, which is ever growing and which is still incomplete, but which will be completed in this age.

The church then is the body of Christ. I have said there is some difficulty in the expression. Yet, when you come to think of it for a moment, perhaps a large part of the

mystery of it will disappear. For instance, what is your body for? Is it not for the manifestation of yourself? You need a body for your manifestation. You might actually exist without your body, but it would be impossible for you to make that existence manifest. The manifestation of the real life and being within is by means of the body.

Then, it is your body which serves you—obeys the purposes which your intelligence—your real being—forms. Your feet carry you whither you would go; your hands toil for you; with your eyes you see, and with your tongue you speak. All these members are made to serve the real man which is within the body and which is greater and more than the body. Well now, Christ has purposes to carry out in this age and dispensation; it is necessary that he shall be manifested, and he is manifested through his church, which is his body. The church then exists for the purpose of manifesting the unseen Christ, of carrying out the will of the unseen Christ, of running his errands in the world, and of preaching his gospel in the world.

The second relation revealed in scripture as the purpose of God in the church is as the bride of Christ. In 2 Corinthians xi:2, we have this statement:

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

Again in Ephesians v:25 to 30:

“Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones.”

The church then is related to Christ as a bride is to a

bridegroom. This relation speaks of affection, of intimacy, of tenderness, of nearness, and all these things are involved in that relationship of the church to Christ. It is the unique and peculiar distinction of the saved of this dispensation. Higher than this, salvation cannot lift a sinner. Its obligation is that the church shall be obedient, loving, chaste and fruitful.

The third purpose for which the church is called out is that she may be the earthly habitation and temple of God.

There was a time when in a peculiar sense, the habitation of God was the holy of holies in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. The shekinah glory was the manifest presence of God, invisible Himself, but evidenced by that mysterious radiance, which was not produced by any earthly or natural means. That glory manifested the presence of God as dwelling among his people Israel. Afterwards when Solomon built the temple, it was by this shining that God took possession of it. That radiance abode in the temple. It pleased him to have a habitation among Israel in the temple.

During this period, when Israel, nationally, is out of fellowship with Jehovah, the church becomes, in herself, the habitation of God through the Spirit. Let me refer you to Ephesians ii:19 to 22:

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."

The fourth reason given for the calling out of the church is that she may be, in the ages or dispensations to come, an object-lesson and an illustration of the grace of God. This is the teaching of Ephesians ii:5 to 7:

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved); and hath raised us up to-

gether, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

You know, that what gives distinctive character to this age is *grace*. The age which immediately follows this, the millennial age, the kingdom age, will not be an age of grace, but an age of righteousness. What is the explanation of the permitted evil which we see all about us? It is that God is forbearing with men; he is holding off judgment from the world while he is calling out the church. God is not now dealing in righteousness; he is dealing in grace. In the age of law, we Gentiles were without hope; we had no promise, no Christ, no God, no light, in fact, nothing. "Without hope and without God in the world." It was Israel which had the promises of God; it was Israel which had the book of God, and it was Israel who had the promise of the Messiah. Remember that not a promise was given to us Gentiles—not one. But now God deals with us in pure grace. We have no promise to plead—no claim in Old Testament covenant, but he takes us up anyway, without promise, and lifts us very high in Christ Jesus; and part of his purpose in so doing is that He may point to us in the ages to come as an object lesson in grace.

If, for instance, I wished to show how gracious I could be, I would not seek out the most deserving person of my acquaintance upon whom to lavish my kindness; neither would I refer to my kindness to my own child as grace, because I owe a personal *duty* to that child; I have assumed a certain responsibility toward that child; but if I wished to show how gracious I could be, I should seek out the most undeserving person I could find anywhere, and then heap benefit upon benefit upon that person. Now that is just what Christ has done for us who have been called out of the lowest place and put into the highest. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the

dung hill, to set him among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory" (1 Samuel ii:8).

Fifthly, the church is revealed as being, in this dispensation, and for eternal purposes, a priesthood.

You will remember God had a priesthood on this earth before this age began, and he will have a priesthood again after it is ended. The priesthood which God first established has passed away. It is not in existence now. There comes in, in the interim, between the age of law and the kingdom age which follows this, the spiritual priesthood composed of the church. I need not read the familiar scriptures which assure you of that.

III. What the church is, its mission and business in the world constitutes another body of testimony.

I believe that the failure of the church to see that she is a separated, a called-out body in the purposes of God, charged with a definite mission limited in its purpose and scope, and the endeavor to take from Israel her promises of earthly glory, and appropriate them over into this church period, has done more to swerve the church from the appointed course than all other influences put together.

It is not so much wealth, luxury, power, pomp, and pride that have served to deflect the church from her appointed course, as the notion, founded upon Israelitish promises, that the church is of the world, and that therefore, her mission is to improve this world. Promises which were given to Israel alone are quoted as justifying what we see all about us. The church, therefore, has failed to follow her appointed pathway of separation, holiness, heavenliness and testimony to an absent but coming Christ; she has turned aside from that purpose to the work of civilizing the world, building magnificent temples, and acquiring earthly power and wealth, and in this way, has ceased to follow in the footsteps of Him who had not where to lay His head. Did you ever

put side by side the promises given to the church, and to Israel, and see how absolutely in contrast they are? It is impossible to mingle them.

The Jew was promised an earthly inheritance, earthly wealth, earthly honor, earthly power. The church is promised no such thing, but is pointed always to heaven as the place where she is to receive her rest and her reward.

The promise to the church is a promise of persecution, if faithful in this world, but a promise of a great inheritance and reward hereafter. In the meantime, she is to be a pilgrim body, passing through this scene, but not abiding here.

Again, the church is to be a witnessing body. In the 1st chapter of Acts, 8th verse, we have these words:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

That is the commission the church received, to witness for Christ; yet to-day, there are 800,000,000 beings on this earth who never heard of Christ. Who are we that we should point the finger of scorn to Israel and say that Israel failed? After 1900 years we are a great church, with an open Bible, and boundless wealth, yet so faithless that 800,000,000 of human beings on this earth have never heard of Christ or the Bible!

In the New Testament we have the history of the church down to the year 96. Let us see, briefly, what that history is. In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we have the birth of the church, and oh, how beautiful she was in her first freshness of faith! It was a lovely manifestation of simplicity, unselfishness, holiness and power. We pass on but a few years, and in the Epistles to the Corinthians, what do we find? Paul writes, "I hear there are divisions among you; one saith I am of Paul; another Apollos, another

Cephas, another of Christ." You see, already, before the apostles had departed from the scene, there had come in divisions. They began then, and they have never ceased. Let me point you to the more than 320 sects in America to-day. Further on we find heresies coming in to defile the faith of the church. In the second and third chapters of Revelation, we have the condition of the church at that time; full of works still, but fallen from first love. In these very chapters of Revelation may also be found prophecies concerning the church which now, alas, have become, in greater part, history.

After Ephesus, A. D. 96, comes the period of persecution. For 300 years the church was in awful suffering. Then came a great change. The Emperor Constantine professed conversion, and Christianity became the court religion. Then the tables were turned and the church began to persecute. And, of all things she should never have done, she turned persecutrix of the Jews. The church, saved by faith in the Messiah who came from the Jews; having in her hand a Bible which was written by the Jews; receiving her teaching solely and only through Jewish sources, became, for 1,000 years, the bitter, relentless, bloody persecutor of Judaism. With that came worldliness and priestly assumption, and the Dark Ages. Then in the fifteenth century, came the Reformation out of which have come Protestant movements of various kinds. The Bible was put into the hands of the people, and has been translated into many tongues. With an open Bible came light and liberty again, but never union again. On the contrary, division followed division; sect followed sect. I know, of course, that there is a substantial unity in doctrine amongst the churches. The great body of the churches believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, but they have turned aside the greater part of their resources, to the attempt to reform the world, to educate the world, and, in short, to anticipate

the next dispensation in which those things belong, and to do now the work that is distinctly set apart for restored and converted Israel.

We shall never succeed in doing it. Oh, that the church might come back to her own mission, leaving to the next age that which is appointed for it. Oh, that we might take up the one commission which we have received, to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

IV. It now remains for me to point out, in conclusion, the destiny—the final end—of the true church of God on earth. It is found in many places, but very distinctly and compactly in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, fourth chapter. Here we have the end of the true church on earth. I do not say the end of the vast mass of profession that calls itself Christian but is not.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

I believe that that day is drawing very near. Oh that in the last remnant of time, before we hear the shout of our descending Lord and rise to meet him in the air, we might come back with holiness of heart to the simplicity of our mission, the evangelization of the world! Dear friends, let us leave the government of the world till the King comes; let us leave the civilizing of the world to be the incidental effect of the presence there of the gospel of Christ, and let us give our time, our strength, our money, our days to the mission distinctively committed to the church, namely: to make Christ known "to every creature."

The Israel of God.

I. PAST.

"He hath not dealt so with any nation" (Psalm clxvii:20).

These words, as you know, are spoken of Israel, God's chosen nation, and they state that which, to the most careless reader of history, is a self-evident fact. The Jew is the miracle of history, and can no more be understood apart from God than the universe can. There are indeed four mysteries which, apart from God, are insoluble.

One of them is the Bible itself. It is impossible to account for the Bible and for the influence it has had in the world unless you assume that it is God's book. It is impossible to account for it on the theory of human origin merely. The question arises, why has no other book like this ever been produced by man in all the long ages of his history? The Bible stands alone; it is not like any other book, nor has its influence in the world been paralleled by any other book or number of books.

The second insoluble mystery apart from the thought of God and the truth of God is that which concerns us now—the problem of the Jew.

The third mystery not to be understood apart from God is the outward universe which we see. No theory of science can escape, finally, the need for a great first cause. If you reduce all that now is back to one primordial germ you are still compelled to account for the existence of that germ, and you have simply crowded God that far back. You cannot do without Him there, at that point.

The other insoluble mystery apart from God is the unique personality of Jesus. But when God is brought into these

problems, all these things, though they may remain in some degree mysteries, are accounted for. The reason rests satisfied, because God is felt to be an adequate explanation.

I. I have said that the Jew is the miracle of history. Consider for a moment the elements of the problem presented to the thoughtful student of Jewish history. The Jew is the most ancient of peoples; so ancient that Disraeli could reply to the lord who taunted him with his Jewish birth: "Sir, you are proud of your ancient descent; but in the veins of the meanest Jew there flows blood compared to which the blood of the proudest noble is ditch water." Yet this Jew, the most ancient of men, is the most modern of men. No man of modern times is more intensely modern. He lives prominently and practically in the present, and enters victoriously into all the ways and thoughts of modern life. Dispersed for centuries among all nations, without any national center, without a national capital, national government, a national flag—with no national rallying point whatever, secular or religious, yet entering always eagerly into the life about him wherever permitted to do so; becoming prime minister here, banker there, merchant, author, composer, always in the front rank of his time, he has never been absorbed into that life, never effaced.

For ages the object of infamous, unreasoning and devilish hatred; plundered, persecuted and outraged in every natural right, every tenderest sensibility; unique in his sufferings no less than in every other respect, he has never been driven into hatred, never into conspiracy, never into disloyalty. Wherever the Jew lives he is loyal to the government under which he lives; and even in the infamous persecutions and provocations which he is enduring in Russia to-day, the Jew is never found among the nihilists, is never found among the conspirators who threaten the life of the emperor and the stability of his throne. To go back

of the present, the Jew, shut up in his wretched ghetto, enduring as he did the unspeakable brutalities of the dark ages, always keener, always subtler, and always stronger with the strength of indomitable and unconquerable perseverance than those who persecuted him, kept alive the ideals of the civic and family virtues, as he kept alive learning.

All other ancient peoples, again, have gone down under the law of degeneracy. That inflexible law, inexorable in its effect upon the Gentile, never touches the Jew. The Jew has seen the conquerors of his people, two or three thousand years ago, descend steadily in the scale of national influence and of personal character until they have become objects of pity or contempt, yet he abides in undiminished vigor of mind and body. The fellahin of Egypt, the peasantry of Syria, and the fever-snitten inhabitants of the Euphrates valley, remain the representatives to our own time of the great conquering nations that overran the Holy Land; but the Jew never was more virile, aggressive and capable, nor ever stronger in position in the affairs of the world than he is to-day. He is in the very forefront of a civilization so relentlessly material that it crushes beneath its chariot wheels everything that is weak. The Jew not only stands before it to-day, but guides it. No wonder the sceptical Renan said: "The philosophy of history fails utterly to account for the Jew."

II. But suppose for one moment, my hearers, that the history of this people is designedly exceptional. Suppose it pleased God away back in the ages to detach from the peoples of the earth one man; to make of him first a family, then a tribe, then tribes, and then a nation; and to entrust to this man, this family, this tribe, these tribes and this nation a unique mission to the world. Suppose, in short, that Israel is set apart of God a representative people, a teaching nation, whose sublime mission is to make Him

known among all the nations of the earth; then the phenomena of Jewish history at once become luminous with meaning, and all that is strange and all that is inexplicable in the light of mere philosophy is explained. The mind at once responds to that explanation of these phenomena—at once pronounces it adequate.

And why should this be thought a violent supposition? We all believe that individuals, through all ages, have been raised up of God for special ministries; we believe that God has again and again interfered beneficently in human affairs, sending deliverers, teachers, leaders—special men with special ministries to their own time, or to their own nations. Why, then, should it be thought incredible that God should raise up a nation to have a special and unique ministry to all the nations, and to all times? And then, because entrusted with a perpetual ministry, that they should be preserved through all mutations and dangers?

If we say that a man is immortal till his work is done, why should it not be true of a people? That in Israel God did this thing is an explanation of the whole mystery of Jewish history; that is precisely the place which the Bible gives to the Jew in human history and human affairs.

When Frederick the Great asked the court preacher for an unanswerable proof of the inspiration of the Bible, he answered, "The Jew, your Majesty, the Jew." When Napoleon asked the archbishop of Milan for the briefest possible argument in support of revealed religion, the archbishop pointed silently to Marshal Massena, a Jew. You know what the Protestant preacher meant. You know what the Roman Catholic archbishop meant. You know that the Scriptures contained in prophetic form the history of the Jews, written before it was enacted; that the Scriptures contained predictions concerning the Jews uttered so long before the events occurred that no human foresight could have anticipated them; and that these predictions

were fulfilled with absolute literalness, thus authenticating the book which contained them as of God.

We may, by long observation of the sources of human action and motive, forecast with some degree of correctness the immediate future; we may be able to form a correct judgment of what is likely to occur within the next year in the movement of human affairs; but the Jewish Scriptures contain predictions concerning that people written centuries before the fulfillment of them, so that it would simply be impossible for human foresight to have anticipated them. Furthermore, these predictions are so minute, detailed and specific that they could not possibly be fortunate guesses. You know that in proportion as a prediction is detailed, minute and specific, there is excluded the possibility of an accidental fulfillment. If I should predict that a man would be murdered here to-morrow, and a man was murdered, that would not necessarily prove that I am a prophet, as it is alas! no uncommon thing for a man to be murdered in these days. But if I should say that the man would be murdered on the corner of Main and some other street; that he would be a Chinaman; that he would be murdered with a certain weapon; that the wound would be inflicted in a certain place; that he would live so many minutes, and that his assailant would be another man, whose name and peculiarities I gave, you would be warranted in saying either that I was in the secret of the slayer's purpose, or else that I had the prophetic vision. Now the Jewish Scriptures contain predictions concerning the people of Israel so ancient, so minute and specific that the fulfillment is no less miraculous than the prophecy.

It comes to this, and this is what the court preacher and the archbishop of Milan meant when they pointed to the Jew as the unanswerable proof on the one hand of the inspiration of Scripture, and on the other hand of the truth of revealed religion, that the Jew verifies the Scriptures in

his history, and that the Scriptures in their foreview explain the mystery of that history. In other words, Jewish history authenticates the Bible and the Bible explains, as it foretells, Jewish history.

III. Let us, before we review swiftly that magnificent epic of the Jew, gather up from Scripture the declared purpose of God in establishing on the soil of Palestine, a peculiar people to be in a unique sense His own, bound to Him in a peculiar covenant, and charged by Him with a world-ministry.

I read very briefly the passages which define the fourfold trust committed to the people of Israel, and the reason, upon God's part, for thus selecting these people and for bringing them into such a relation to Himself.

I. First, then, Israel was raised up to be a witness to the unity of God in the midst of universal idolatry, pantheism, polytheism.

"Hear, O, Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy vi:4).

To the Jew was committed the preservation of that primal truth, once the common possession of the race, that God is one. We are now so familiar with that fact; it is, so to speak, a part of our very consciousness, that it is very difficult for us to consider how absolutely it was lost by all nations except this one. For centuries no other people believed that truth, or taught it; Israel alone was a witness to the unity, the oneness of God.

That Israel, previous to the Babylonian captivity (but never since then), often fell into idolatry is most true; but equally true is it that, under God, the Jew has been the teacher of monotheism to the earth. No Gentile nation, untouched by Jewish influence, ever became monotheistic. I will read again from Isaiah xliii:10—

"Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom

I have chosen; that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He; before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me."

This, then, first of all, was the mission committed to Israel; to know God, and to be a witness to the great truth that God is one. And I ask you to consider the immense significance of that fact. Consider the bearing of it upon the necessity for a revelation from God if men are ever to know God. Consider the bearing of it upon the mission of Israel to the race.

2. Then secondly, Israel was separated from the nations that she might illustrate to them the blessedness of serving and obeying the one true God.

"Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people saved by Jehovah?" (Deut. xxxiii:29).

"Happy is that people whose God is Jehovah" (Psalms cxliv:15).

The history of Israel obedient, is an unanswerable vindication of the truth of these texts. Did you ever think that this earth never saw a world-monarchy, a power like Babylon or Medo-Persia, or Greece or Rome so long as that little nation of Israelites kept its covenant with Jehovah? Think of it. Surrounded by warlike peoples, each mightier than herself, that little Jewish commonwealth dwelt in perfect safety under the shadow of the Almighty. So perfect did God balance nation against nation that no one of them could permit another to acquire the Holy Land. Just as Belgium or Switzerland keep their national existence in Europe, not by numbers or military prowess, but by the watchful jealousy of the greater nations surrounding them, so Israel abode in prosperity and peace in the olden time—an object lesson to the idolatrous heathen. Pastor Oberlin led his peasant parish in the Vosges mountains to adopt a better agriculture by fertilizing one acre in a large field. When the wheat came up that acre was greener and more prolific than the rest of the field. Just so the peace, prosperity and splendor

of ancient Israel was God's object lesson to the nations. Remember, there never was a world-conqueror or a world-monarchy until Israel had broken her covenant with Jehovah.

There is a very remarkable Scripture bearing upon the relation of the national Israel to the Gentile nations which I will read:

"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deut. xxxii:8).

Could anything be more explicit? The very distribution of the earth among the nations was with careful reference to the children of Israel.

3. The third purpose of God in creating this people was that they might be the writers, preservers and transmitters of His inspired words:

"Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments * * * for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which hear all these statutes, and say surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people" (Deut. iv:5, 6).

This passage scarcely requires comment. No one questions that the Bible came to us from the Jew, nor that the whole vast fabric of modern civilization—of any civilization which is characterized by liberty, regulated by law—rests upon the statutes of God revealed to and preserved by the children of Israel. The Jew has not only brought to us the sublime truth that God is one, but he has brought to us from God the decalogue. Do you doubt that? Will you, then, kindly tell me where Moses got the law? He was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians—did he get the decalogue from them? Nay, verily, Egyptian learning is open to our study to-day, but it neither contains the law of Moses nor anything in the remotest degree like it. But I read farther under this head, this time from the New

Testament. Ah! I wish the Gentile church really believed what the New Testament tells it concerning the place of the Jew in the counsels of God, past and future. I read from Romans iii:1, 2:—

“What advantage then hath the Jew, or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way, chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

This, then, is part of the mission of Israel, to receive Divine communications, that through them these communications may reach the rest of the world, and none of them have ever come to the world but through the Jew—none of them. It is the Jew's Bible I hold in my hand, and it is God's Bible back of that, and it is the Christian's Bible, because God has sent it to us through the Jew.

4. The fourth purpose of God in calling out and separating this people was that to them might be committed the Messianic promise; that is, it was ordained of God that out of this nation should come the supreme Prophet and Priest and King and Redeemer for the whole earth.

I do not raise the Messianic question—whether Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. I believe with every fiber of my being He was, but this question will be taken up, if the Lord will, two weeks from to-night.

To recapitulate: The fourfold purpose of God in constituting the people of Israel was—First, that they might be a witness to the unity of God; second, to illustrate the blessedness of serving the one true God; third, to receive the revelations and communications that God might make to this world; fourth, to produce the Prophet of the world, the Priest of the world, the King of the world, and the Saviour of the world.

IV. It remains now to sketch as briefly as possible the past history of this wonderful people. That history, as

you know, falls into distinct epochs. There is, first of all, the genesis, or origin of the people, in the call of Abraham.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee" (Gen. xii:1-3).

Can you point to me a passage in this Bible which revokes that last promise? Can you bring me one single illustration from history of a nation that has persecuted the Jew and escaped chastisement? If I had no other proof that this Bible is inspired the literal fulfillment in human history of that last promise would be to me the convincing, unanswerable demonstration that this book is from God. Never, never, has that statement been revoked. No nation ever persecuted the Jew and escaped national retribution. Haman is always hanged ultimately on the gallows prepared for Mordecai.

Here, too, we have the Messianic promise: "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

And so Abraham, called from an idolatrous nation, becomes the first Hebrew. Here begins the patriarchal period which extends to the Egyptian captivity. I need not dwell upon that. The stories of the patriarchs were learned at our mothers' knee. We know the whole story of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph, and of how, in the lifetime of the patriarch Jacob, the descendants of this man Abraham, all went down into Egypt.

The next great event in Jewish history was the Exodus. God sent that wonderful man, Moses, authenticating him by mighty works, to deliver his people. You remember the story of the Exodus, how he brought the tribes out from under the despotism of the mighty Pharaoh; how he

brought them into the wilderness, where they wandered forty years in the school of God, and of how, finally, Joshua led them into the land promised to Abraham and his seed in an everlasting covenant.

There is, in the purpose of God, an inseparable connection between the Jew and that land. Always bear that in mind. It is the key which unlocks many prophetic secrets. Remember that it was Jesus who said the holy city should be trodden down of the Gentiles only till the times of the Gentiles should be fulfilled.

Established in the covenanted land under the leadership of Joshua, there followed the third distinct phase of national life—the times of the Judges. The government was a theocracy, administered at first through elders, and afterward, when declension had set in, by special deliverers and rulers known as judges. Becoming dissatisfied with the government of an invisible King, the people went to Samuel, the Prophet, and asked him that a king like the kings of the nations be given them. God's ominous answer was: "They have rejected me from being their king," and they chose Saul because he was the largest and strongest man among them. Here began the fourth or monarchical period.

I need not dwell upon these things; they are perfectly familiar to all readers of the Bible. You will remember that after Saul's failure God chose a king—David, "a man after his own heart." With David he entered into that wonderful covenant which secures to Messiah his earthly throne. Under David, and Solomon his splendid son, the kingdom came to its greatest wealth and power. After Solomon's death the kingdom was divided, ten tribes going off with Jeroboam to set up the kingdom of Samaria, and two tribes—Judah and Benjamin—retaining possession of Jerusalem and the temple. Then followed the long history of the divided monarchy, a history of deadly wars and

hatred. They all again and again fell into idolatry, and at last Israel, and (some 200 years after) Judah, were carried into captivity.

The period of the divided monarchy was made illustrious by the mighty ministry of the prophets.

With the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the captivity of Judah, began that long period which still continues, known to Scripture as "the times of the Gentiles." In the book of Daniel, who was a prophet of the captivity, we have this period described. The image-vision of Nebuchadnezzar gives the Gentile view of it; the wild-beast vision of Daniel the Divine view. The sum of both is that Gentile dominion will continue until the Ancient of days shall come and set up His kingdom. Remember, the end of Gentileism is not brought about by peaceful means—the stone smites the image and it falls into ruin.

After seventy years a remnant of Jews, some 40,000 in number, were permitted to return and rebuild the holy city, Jerusalem, and the temple, thus beginning the fifth historic period. There, but never wholly free from Gentile domination, except for a moment under the Maccabees, they remained until the destruction of Jerusalem and the final dispersion of the Jews in the year 70 by the Romans under Titus.

And yet this period is, even to the mere historian, the most momentous and significant in any in all the long, checkered history of the Israel of God, for sixty-five years before its tragic close, there was born in Bethlehem the Man of Nazareth and of Calvary, revered by thoughtful Jews as the greatest of their teachers, worshipped by us Christians as the Son of God. Into this question I do not, however, now enter; reserving the discussion of the unique claims and personality of Jesus to a subsequent occasion.

And now with the dispersion of the year A. D. 70, be-

gins the sixth and in many respects, the saddest, period of the whole long history of the Jews. As a Gentile, I would veil it if I could. Nothing, in all the history of the Gentile nations, is so infamous, so inexcusable, so utterly without reason, as the treatment of the Jews in their dispersion during 1400 long years by those who called themselves "Christians." If the Jew does not hate the name, it is because he is the most forgiving as he is the most patient of men. And yet I stand here to deny that the Jew was ever persecuted by any *true* Christian. The time of his infamy synchronizes with the time of supremacy of the great apostate church, which held the minds and the consciences of men as in a vise for centuries. Then and under that influence, the so-called Christian persecutions took place. It is simply a fact of history that with the return to purer Christianity—in other words, to essential Christianity—there came, gradually at first, but with ever increasing rapidity, the removal of the sore burdens that rested upon the poor dispersed Jew, until to-day he stands, in all the Protestant nations, our brother man.

In England he has been prime minister, and in the United States there is not, nor has there ever been, an anti-Jewish statute. There are probably about 9,000,000 Jews at the present time. Where are they? They are dispersed among all nations of the earth. You cannot go anywhere without finding the Jew.

In the beginning of this discourse I said that the Scriptures account for the Jew, and that the Jew, in turn, is the ever-living everywhere-present, verification of the Scriptures. Now just here, in this fact of his world-wide dispersion, is an illustration of that two-fold truth.

I turn for a moment to the xxviii, xxix and xxx chapters of Deuteronomy. Written more than three thousand years ago, in the wilderness of Moab, before the tribes had gone into the land, before the nation had been constituted,

these chapters contain in a prophetic form a synopsis of the entire history of the chosen people from that day to this—closing with such a prophecy as might be taken bodily for a description of the present-day Israel.

See how true to subsequent history this most ancient prophecy is. First there is the promise of blessing consequent upon obedience:

"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth" (Deut. xxviii:1).

Then follow the warnings of the judgments which were to follow disobedience (Read Deut. xxviii:58-66).

How wonderfully, with what exact literalness, this passage has been fulfilled. It is literally true this day of the Jews in Russia, where the largest body of Jews is gathered. You will find, if you trace the dispersion through the history of the last 1800 years, that wherever the great body of the Jewish people are gathered there, invariably, they are persecuted. Here and there in every age they are persecuted. In Russia there are 4,000,000 Jews, possibly 4,500,000, and surely every generous and kindly heart is touched with the story that comes to us of their cruel sufferings.

Another thing has always been true; wherever the Jew is persecuted he is orthodox; he believes that the prophecies will be literally fulfilled in him. Wherever the Jew has rest, wherever he is protected by the law equally with all other men, his immense capacity brings him wealth and power, and gradually he ceases to believe in the literal fulfillment of his prophecies as he loses all desire to go back to the Holy Land or to have his national life reconstituted.

May they bide Jehovah's time in peace and honor, but may they also remember that Jehovah's time for Israel's

restoration will surely come, for he has sworn it. Rest here, O Israel! but do not forget to say: "This year here; the next at home."

Such, briefly and most inadequately sketched, is the past history of the Jews.

II. FUTURE.

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi:25, 26).

Had the proposal been that he should discuss the future of any other people than Israel I, for one, would not attempt it. And for this sufficient reason: our task in that case would be purely a speculative one. At the best our conclusions be but plausible probabilities, having worth and weight in the precise degree of the breadth of fact upon which our generalizations were based, and of the soundness of our reasoning upon them; and sure at last to be upset by the constant intrusion into human affairs of the unforeseen. Who, for example, forecasting the course of European affairs from the point of view of 1793, could have foreseen the overthrow of probabilities by the tremendous apparition of Napoleon Bonaparte?

But, it is the unique distinction of Israel that she has for a historian the Holy Spirit of God. Speaking by many voices, through many ages, it has invariably been His method to make the record anticipate the event; and, since to Him past and future are one eternal present, He has been pleased always to publish the story of Israel's destiny in advance of its accomplishment.

We are not, then, to indulge in idle and profitless speculations, but to study the inspired and therefore inerrant history of Israel's future. My task is but to gather up into orderly sequence the testimony of the Holy Spirit, through

the prophets. The method is as simple as the result is sure. The testimony is ample and unambiguous, and we shall have only ourselves to blame if we do not know with absolute certainty, in all its broader outlines, at least, the future toward which Israel is hastening. It matters nothing that to many this future is unwelcome; each of the nations of earth, and every unit of those nations, is moving irresistibly towards a rendezvous which God has fixed, and when the hour strikes, nations and individuals will be there.

If, therefore, God has decreed the reconstitution of the nation of Israel upon the sacred soil of Palestine, no reluctance of the people will avail to delay it an hour. May I be permitted to say that it is to me an inscrutable mystery that any should feel this reluctance; that any Jew should willingly turn from the magnificent picture of Israel's beneficent primacy among the nations which the prophets declare to be her destiny.

Permit me also a prefatory word as to the true law of prophetic interpretation. I am of course perfectly aware that there is a school of interpretation, having disciples among both Jews and Christians, which insists that, unlike all other writings, unfulfilled prophecy is to be interpreted, not in the natural and unforced sense of the words themselves, but in an allegorical, or so-called "spiritual" sense. Christian exegetes of this school follow the simple plan of literalizing all the curses and bestowing them upon the Jews; while spiritualizing all the blessings and claiming them for the church. Thus all difficulties in prophetical interpretation are neatly avoided and Gentile conceit goes un wounded.

Our Jewish brethren of the spiritualizing school apply the allegorical method to the Messianic predictions, interpreting them of the nation, and not of a personal Messiah. In this way the Messianic element, properly speaking, is eliminated.

inated from the prophetic writings. Passages which seem to speak of Messiah's humiliation and sufferings are said to refer to the sorrow and sore travail of dispersed and persecuted Judah. The glowing strains in which the spirit of prophecy describes Messiah's reign over the redeemed and delivered earth, with restored Israel at the head of the nations, and the word of the Lord going out from Jerusalem, are interpreted of the present prosperity of the Jews in some lands. Ah, my hearers, I do not wonder that Russian Jews are orthodox! Suppose we were to go to the sorrowful victims of the persecution in that land and tell them that "the nineteenth century is the Messiah?"

Of this allegorical or spiritualizing method whether employed by Christian or Jew it is enough to say that God himself has, for thousands of years, been disproving it. He has been expounding prophecy by fulfilling it. It would be difficult to point out a chapter in the prophetic writings of which a part has not been reduced from foresight to fact, from prediction to history. The question, therefore, is a simple question of fact, "How does God fulfill prophecy?" Does the event answer to the prediction in some figurative, allegorical or "spiritual" sense, or in literal and exact detail? When, for example, Jehovah said to Abram (Genesis xv:13-14), "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and afterwards they shall come out with great substance," what did He mean? Did He mean that Abram's seed should enter another phase of spiritual experience which would cause them mental disquietude and heart searching, out of which they would emerge richer in spirituality; or did he mean what the words naturally imply? Let the monuments of Egypt and the ruins of the treasure cities answer. There was nothing allegorical in the whips of the Egyptian task-masters, nor spiritual in the double tale of bricks. When

Jehovah warned Israel that the effect of disobedience in the land would be a world-wide dispersion, with terrible and unremitting persecutions, what did He mean? Put the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy by the side of Jewish history and find your answer. He meant precisely what He said.

And so I might go on taking up one after another of the prophecies which have been fulfilled, and find in every instance the same truth, that prophecy invariably receives a literal fulfillment. Not one exception can be found. Figures and visions, of course, abound in these writings, but when the thing signified by the figure is ascertained we may be sure that thing will come to pass. History answers to prediction as the wax to the seal.

We have then a divine law of prophetical interpretation. It is not open to dispute. Please observe that it is established by the identical processes employed in the exact sciences for the discovery of natural law. Natural law rests upon unvarying phenomena. The law of gravitation rests upon the fact that ponderable substances always fall to the earth. The law of prophetic interpretation rests upon the immutability of the divine counsels. We turn, then, to the prophets, not as those about to decipher hieroglyphics or force a sphinx to speak, but as to an open and unambiguous word, which an apostle of Jesus declared to be "a light that shineth in a dark place." "Surely," says Amos, "the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants, the prophets."

The first of the prophetic passages which I shall quote is Deut. xxx:1-8.

It will be remembered that these were among the last words of Moses before he went up into Nebo to receive the kiss of death from God. In chapters xxviii and xxix the people were solemnly warned that the consequence of disobedience in the land which they were about to enter would

be dispossession, dispersion among all nations, and unexampled sufferings.

"And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night and shalt have none assurance of thy life; in the morning thou shalt say, 'Would God it were even,' and at even thou shalt say, 'Would God it were morning,' for the fear of thy heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."

Now against this dark background there flashes out the glorious promise to which I refer:

"And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.
* * * And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and He will do thee good and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day."

Observe in this passage three points:

1. It does not refer to the Babylonian captivity, for the dispersion here spoken of is "among all nations."
2. Jehovah gathers His people "from all the nations."
3. He brings them into the land which their fathers possessed.

Every one knows what that land is. Here, then, if there

were no other passage, is a plain declaration of the purpose of God to plant again His ancient people in their own land.

Passing wholly by the Psalms, so many of which are undeniably millennial and prophetic of the same event, we come to Isaiah. Here, and in the remaining prophetic books, we shall be simply embarrassed what part of the copious testimony to select for quotation. Leaving out the history of the times, and those utterances of the prophets which had a local and near fulfillment, it may be said that of the remaining predictive parts, fully five-sixths relate in some way to the restoration. Take as an example of the testimony of Isaiah such passages as Isaiah ii:1-4.

As is well known, the "spiritualizers" interpret this passage of the Church. The sufficient reply is that Isaiah expressly says that it concerns Judah and Jerusalem.

In chapter xi:11, 12, the prediction becomes more definite.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

Comment upon a passage so explicit should be superfluous. I will ask you only to note that the prophet declares the restoration here predicted to be the "second;" that it cannot refer to the partial restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah, from the Babylonian captivity, because, first, it is not a deliverance from Assyria merely, but the regathering of a world-wide dispersion, and second, because both Israel (the ten tribes) and Judah are gathered. Ezra and Nehemiah, as is well known, led back only a remnant of Judah with a few Levites.

In chapter xvi:1-3, a very important point of detail, hence-

forth always insisted on, is added, viz., that the restoration is to be to "their own land."

Observe, also, the exaltation which is in this passage predicted for long dispersed and persecuted Israel. By no accommodation of language can this be interpreted of the restoration at the end of the seventy years of Babylonian captivity. So far from the house of Israel ruling over their oppressors then, or having rest from fear, Nehemiah describes the condition of the remnant as most miserable:

"Behold we are servants this day; and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it" (Nehemiah ix:36).

Turning now to Jeremiah, and passing over much that is pertinent, I quote from his prophecy, xvi:14, 15:

"Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither He had driven them; and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers."

An advance will be noted here. The restoration is now compared with the deliverance out of Egypt, and the assertion is made that, marvelous as was the exodus, this final work of God for Israel will so transcend it in majestic power that "it shall no more be said, the Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt." Here again, also, I must ask you to note that the restoration is from a world-wide dispersion, and the "land" is identified beyond peradventure as "their land that I gave unto their fathers." Not the United States, not England, not any land where the Jews may have temporary peace and prosperity, but Palestine.

It is impossible seriously to pretend that this prediction has been fulfilled in any sense. Who, for example, ever referred to the return to Palestine under sufferance of a

heathen king of less than fifty thousand men of Judah as an event so supremely wonderful as to efface by its greater splendor the amazing events of the exodus?

The same comparison is repeated in Jer. xxiii:7, 8.

The restoration is repeatedly the theme of Jeremiah, the "prophet of tears." It would seem that, called to a most sorrowful ministry, it pleased Jehovah to comfort him by oft repeated visions of the final glory of Israel.

I can but refer, without pausing for comment, to the magnificent visions of Ezekiel, of which this event was the theme. Characteristically he often sees it associated with Jehovah's purifying judgments, and to him was committed the prophetic picture of Israel restored, and in the land, rather than of the process of the re-gathering.

"And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel, saith the Lord, there shall all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, serve Me; there will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings, and the first fruits of your obligations, with all your holy things. I will accept you with your sweet savor, when I bring you out from the people and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hand to give it to your fathers" (Ezk. xx:34-38, 41-44).

The vision of the valley of dry bones is self-explanatory, if the context be noted. The bones are expressly declared

to be the "whole house of Israel," at the precise time when they shall say: "Our hope is lost." Do you wonder that I think of this vision when I hear some of my Jewish friends say "we no longer look for the Messiah!" What is it but the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prediction that before the wonderful restoration the national hope would be given up—"our hope is lost!" The vision closes with this explicit promise:

"And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them. And shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever.

"Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them, and I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.

"My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

"And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore" (Ezk. xxxvii:19-28).

Here you will not fail to observe the reference to the restoration of the Davidic monarchy; the promise that the ten tribes and the two shall no longer be divided into two kingdoms, and that the earthly center of the worship of God shall be in Jerusalem. Rome is in a very real sense the religious capital of the world now. When Israel is restored Jerusalem will be that center.

Passing now to the book of Daniel we find, appropriately in a prophet whose ministry was among Gentiles (and in some sense *to* Gentiles), a view of the whole course of "the times of the Gentiles." Indeed, we have in this book two views, both in vision form. Nebuchadnezzar, the Gentile monarch with whom the "times of the Gentiles" began,

sees the history of Gentileism in the vision of the great image, the monarchy colossus. Daniel interprets the vision. The head of gold is Nebuchadnezzar himself; the breast and arms of silver represent the Medo-Persian empire which followed Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian kingdom; the thighs and body of brass, the Grecian empire of Alexander; the legs of iron, the Roman world-empire. The feet and toes, "part of iron and part of clay," are explained to mean "ten kings that shall arise," who shall be confederated under an imperial head (the "Beast" of Revelation xiii), and the statement follows that "in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom." That, as we shall see in the address on the millennium, is the Davidic kingdom of Ezekiel and the other prophets. Gentile domination, then, begins with Nebuchadnezzar and goes on until Israel is restored.

The second monarchy vision was that of Daniel. To him Gentile domination over the world in these four successive forms was revealed in four wild beasts. That gives the character of the Gentile power, as the monarchy colossus gives its duration and outward magnificence. What is that character? What, it may be asked in answer, is the character of wild beasts? Rapacious, selfish, bloodthirsty. Did you ever think how, unconsciously, we have accepted God's mark? Every Gentile power has for its symbol a beast or bird of prey! The lion, leopard, eagle. Never the lamb or the dove. Ah! my hearers, when God puts his mark on a thing it sticks.

This is Daniel's story. It is only in his last chapter (xii:1) that Daniel sees full national deliverance, and then in connection with the "Great Tribulation:"

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

In the other prophets please read Joel iii:1, 2, 17-21, and Amos ix:11-15; Micah iv:1-7; Zephaniah iii:16-20.

Zechariah* presents the result rather than the fact of the restoration, though this is explicitly stated. He teaches clearly what is elsewhere in the prophets abundantly intimated, viz.: that not until after the restoration of Israel will the Gentile nations be converted to God. Read Zechariah viii:20-23.

It now remains to show that the restoration of Israel is a New Testament as well as an Old Testament doctrine.

In the lament of Jesus Christ over Jerusalem (Matt. xxiii:37-39), he expressly limits the time of her treading down till she shall say: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." In Luke xxi:24, he uses the following language:

"And they shall fall by the edge of the sword and they shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

This is not a mere implication, but an explicit assertion, which limits the time of the treading down of Jerusalem.

In Acts xv:14-17, the apostle James, speaking for the church, declared the divine program for this dispensation and the beginning of the next.

The order of events is clear. God is now taking out of the Gentiles a people. After that, according to James' quotation from Amos, the Messiah will return, and re-establish in his own person the Davidic dynasty, after which will occur the conversion of the Gentiles. Zechariah shows us that this conversion will be through Jewish agency.

The eleventh chapter of Romans is an elaborate discussion of the relation of Israel to this dispensation in view of the promises to the fathers. It is expressly asserted that God "hath not cast away his people," that "blindness in part

*For a complete exposition of Israel's coming restoration as revealed through Zechariah, see "Studies in Zechariah," by A. C. G.

hath happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in," and that "all Israel shall be saved" by the appearance of the Deliverer out of Zion.

It would be interesting to trace in connection with this fascinating theme the time indications, thus demonstrating, as I could easily do, that all the signs indicate the solemn nearness of the regathering. I would like, also, to show the indissoluble connection of this restoration with the presence and direct agency of David's divine Son, the Messiah; but here I will stop, not adding the prophetic proofs that this people, so long "scattered and peeled," "afflicted and tossed with tempest," the true "Niobe of nations," shall yet be the first of nations and not the last, majestic and holy, the channel, as always, of light and blessing from God to the nations of the millennial earth.

III. THE MESSIANIC QUESTION.

We are to consider next what is called the Messianic Question. I greatly desire for the sake of clearness of thought, to keep this Messianic question distinct from the other questions to which it stands related, but you certainly will recall from the previous articles that I found it utterly impossible to do so. And for this reason: the future of Israel stands so intimately connected with the promise of a Messiah that it is impossible to consider it entirely apart from that promise, and therefore, in reading to you the passages from the prophets which foretell the restoration of the ancient people of God to their own land, and their establishment at the head of the nations, I was not able to hide the fact that this restoration cannot be wholly disconnected from that personage. We are now to face that question directly—the question of Messiah.

It is unnecessary to say that "Messiah" and "Christ" are exactly equivalent terms; that they mean, in themselves, no more than anointed. This word, though, has come to have

a special application to that personage upon whom the counsels of God as unfolded in the Scriptures converge. Really the Messianic question, when we come to look at it closely, resolves itself into several questions.

First of all, is it correct to say that there is any Messianic question? In other words, do the Scriptures contain a doctrine of the Messiah? There are some persons (not by any means destitute of learning) who deny that rightly understood, the Old Testament contains any Messianic doctrine. They claim that it has been altogether read into these Scriptures, first, by rabbis of olden time, the scribes and rulers, and then taken up, amplified, and made central in evangelical theology by Christian exegetes. So there is, as you see, really a question as to whether there is a Messianic question.

I do not regard this contention as very important for the reason, if for no other, that it is not raised by any considerable number of persons. A little group of Jewish scholars, and a little group of Gentile scholars, very "advanced" as they call themselves, do raise the question, but the great body of Jewish, as of Christian exegetes, maintain that there is a doctrine of the Messiah. Of course, they disagree on the one point of the identity of Messiah; the Jews denying the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christian exegetes affirming it.

If we answer this question in the affirmative, and say that there is a doctrine of the Messiah, we, of course, come to another question: Who and what is Messiah? In other words, what marks of identity are attached to this personage in the Scriptures so that the world may be perfectly sure it is not deceived by an impostor; so that it will not be open to any one not the Messiah, to maintain a claim to the character, and thus falsely secure to himself the rights that properly belong to the true Messiah.

Of course, if there is any prophetic testimony concerning such a coming one, the object of that testimony must be

two-fold: First, to furnish these very marks of identity of which I speak; and secondly, to prepare the Jews and through them the world, to receive this personage when he should come. These two things are evident: God would not send into the world one having such rights as we shall find to belong to Messiah, without in some efficient way providing for his authentication. To illustrate, I understand there is somewhere a young man who claims to be, not merely the Messiah of the Old Testament, but the actual historic Christ of the New Testament, and he has gathered a number of deluded people who believe in him, and upon whose credulity he is living. Now how do we know that he is an impostor? Because he does not answer to the prophetic portrait of Messiah.

We come, then, to our second question: How may we know the Messiah? What kind of person will he be? Of what country? Of what ancestry? What works will he do?

Thirdly, we come to the question of fundamental interest to us, as Christians, and surely, of no less interest to the candid Jew: Was Jesus the Messiah? A vast number of people (and no inconsiderable number of Jews) have, through all the ages, believed, with the Scriptures in their hands, that Jesus was the Messiah; and, surely, our Jewish friends who do not so receive Him, will admit that it is a question of supreme national and personal import to them whether he be indeed that personage.

Now it is evident that an inquiry as to the second of these questions will indirectly answer the first. If we can find in Scripture certain marks of identity put upon and about a certain Coming One, that answers the question as to whether there is a doctrine of the Messiah. We shall not of course, find the prophetic portrait there unless there is coming or already come, the original from whom the portrait was painted. If there is no doctrine of the Messiah in Scripture,

we shall fail to find the portrait. If, on the other hand, we do find the portrait, then we must say that there is a Messianic doctrine, whoever the Messiah may turn out to be.

It is also evident that the answer to the second question as to the marks of identity and of the conditions which must be fulfilled by the Messiah when He comes, will guide, and must guide us, in the answer to the third question: Is Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah? If He is the Messiah, we shall know Him to be so because He answers exactly to every one of the Scriptural marks of identity given by the prophets. That must be the test. If, in even one of them—as many and as minute as they are—we find that Jesus fails, then we must say however great the cost may be to our hearts and thoughts and opinions that he is not the Messiah. If, on the other hand, he fills out in every detail the prophetic picture of Messiah, without one exception, then, it seems to me that, by the same reasoning, and by the same logical necessity, we are forced to say that Jesus is the Messiah.

I. This is a Biblical question; it is not a question to be settled by appeal to theologians or rabbis. For it is perfectly evident that a Jewish scholar, for instance, might marshal as many and as eminent authorities from among his own intellectual and thoughtful people against the Messiahship of Jesus, as a Christian could bring to its support. That would be simply a clash of human and therefore fallible opinion. The question is not to be determined by a show of hands. We must go back to the Old Testament and see for ourselves what doctrine of Messiah is there unfolded, and then test the claims of Jesus by that doctrine.

Like all other parts of God's revelation we shall find it to proceed from the simple to the complex—from outline to detail. It is the divine method of revelation to begin with some outline truth, and then gradually, with stroke upon

stroke of the brush to put in the details until we have the fulness. "First the blade; then the ear; then the full corn in the ear" is the divine rule. We do not get the oak first, but the acorn, and afterward the oak.

Just so it is with all Scripture. We shall find it true of this Messianic doctrine. It will begin with a germ-truth and proceed with increasing detail from simplicity to complexity. Let me turn now to Genesis iii:14, 15:

"And the Lord God said unto the serpent, because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Here lies in germ all redemptive and Messianic truth. The woman's seed is to inflict upon Satan, finally, a fatal wound, but in so doing, is to suffer. It does not tell us much, and we will not read into it a word from subsequent revelation, but it does set us looking for a descendant of that woman who shall be victorious over Satan.

Let us turn now to Genesis xii:1-3:

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram: Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Now let us not treat these words unfairly. They are luminous in the light of what is to follow, but, certainly are not in themselves a promise that of the descendants of Abraham there should arise a Messiah. I want you only to notice here that a blessing is promised to this man Abraham for all the families of the earth. That is all, but hold that much firmly in mind. I will read now from Genesis xv:1-4:

"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed; and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."

Again in the 18th chapter, 18th verse:

"Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him."

Again, be sure to keep within the limits of the text. This is no promise of a personal Messiah; so far we have only a *nation* in which all nations are to be blessed. Let me, however, anticipate enough to say that I am going to connect by an indisputable chain of evidence, the Messiah with this promise.

Of course, I am assuming that the Genesis story is familiar to every one of you. You know that Abram had a son born in his house named Ishmael. At this time he was the only son, and Abram besought God to fulfil in Ishmael the promises which I have quoted, and this is God's answer:

"And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (Gen. xvii:19).

Here, you see, the principle of selection, of limitation, enters. And, of course, you see the bearing of it upon the identification of Messiah. Suppose an Ishmaelite comes to me and says: "I am the Messiah," I am ready to say "No, whoever the Messiah may be, you are not the Messiah, you are a descendant of Ishmael, and not of Isaac. The Messiah must come through Isaac." In this way, as we shall see, God narrows the possibilities of deception until they are

wholly excluded. Ishmael and all his descendants are excluded. The Messiah must come through Isaac. Let us now turn to Gen. xxviii:13, 14:

"And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

We have here, as you know, the scene at Bethel, where God entered into covenant with Jacob, the son of Isaac. And here again the principle of exclusion is seen. There had been another son, Esau, remember that; and that the Abrahamic promise passes over Esau to Jacob. No descendant of Esau may claim the Messianic title.

And now we are to see eleven of the twelve tribes of Israel excluded:

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stoopeth down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix:8-10).

You see how immensely the slender line of promise here gains in definiteness. Out of twelve tribes, one tribe is chosen, the tribe of Judah. From henceforth we look expectantly to Judah only. It is not enough that the claimant of the Messiahship shall be an Israelite merely; he must establish a Judaic descent.

Here, for the first time, we have the word "sceptre" indicating kingly power. We also have the word "Shiloh." The old Rabbis all agree that this is the description of Messiah as the Prince of Peace. The word Shiloh implies that,

Notice another significant thing here. "To him shall the gathering of the people be." A Messianic mark. The people are to gather to him as a center.

In Numbers xxiii., xxiv. we have the successive prophetic visions of Balaam. I will read but one of them:

"I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion" (Num. xxiv:17-19).

Here we have "sceptre" again. When God has added a detail He never leaves it behind any more; it is always carried on. You are to note, too, that in these passages, we get, not only the idea of dominion, of rule, but also the idea of *personality*—"I shall see *him*, but not now."

Let me anticipate an objection right here. Does not this mean the whole people of Israel? Does not the Messianic doctrine really concern a people, rather than a person, and is it not true that the promises which we Christians are apt to make personal, are after all, rather indefinite? That question is raised by some. But notice the words: "There shall come a Star *out* of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise *out* of Israel." And to this we may add another statement contemporary with it:

The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deuteronomy xviii:15).

This passage, from the lips of Moses, adds one of the official titles of Messiah. The Sceptered One out of Israel is to be a Prophet also.

Now we come to another limitation of the promise. It is the promise made to David concerning Solomon:

"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out

of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men; but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee; thy throne shall be established for ever" (2 Sam. vii:14-16).

Let us see how David understood this covenant. We have his last words in the 23d chapter of 2 Samuel, verses 1 to 5:

"Now these be the last words of David. David, the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel said: The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me: He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure."

Here are the last words of David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel; his life stained with many sins, yet a man who loved God supremely. As he lay there dying, his last thoughts turned to that promise which God made concerning his seed.

Let us see now how the prophets interpreted that promise:

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and might; the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah xi:1, 2).

Well, but some one says, this might have referred to any descendant of David. It might have referred to the line of King Josiah, for instance, who was of the Davidic line. Let us see. I will read the tenth verse:

"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious."

"In that day." What day? A day which has not yet dawned. Hear verse two:

"And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

When Isaiah wrote these words, the people had not gone into Assyria, and this prophecy has never been fulfilled down to this day.

Let us now turn to the prophecy of Jeremiah. Of course, I pass over chapter after chapter in Isaiah which might be quoted. I want you to notice the word "Branch" as a mark of identification.

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jeremiah xxiii:5). "For thus saith the Lord, David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually. And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David, my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne" (Jeremiah xxxiii: 17-21).

Here again is a narrowing of the whole Messianic outlook. We began with a promise that might have been fulfilled in any man born of woman; it was narrowed first into the man, Abram; then Ishmael and his posterity were excluded and Isaac chosen; then Esau and his descendants

were excluded and Jacob chosen; then out of the twelve sons of Jacob Judah was chosen, and now, out of all Judah, David and his line. Whoever the Messiah is, he must come from the kingly house of David, and therefore must be of Judah—a Jew. Do you not see how the marks of identity are accumulating? It would not do even for a Jew to say "I am the Messiah," unless he could establish his Davidic descent.

II. It seems to me that we are getting a very positive sort of Messianic doctrine, and very definite sort of Messianic doctrine as well.

And so far it has been perfectly simple and quite within the limits of the natural. But now we come to something in this line of descent which is miraculous. Turn back with me to the prophecy of Isaiah. I will read the 13th and 14th verses of the vii chapter.

"And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

You know the meaning of that word—"God with us." I want you to observe that these words are addressed to the house of David. You know we speak sometimes of this or that part of Scripture as difficult to understand. Students have come to me with the ix chapter of Romans to say that they could not understand it; and people say that the passage I have just read is a difficult passage. The fact is, that the difficulty is not in understanding it, but in believing it. It is all plain enough. There could not be a simpler statement put into words. God promised to give the house of David a sign by which it might know the long promised One when He should appear. The sign would be that, in that house and family, a virgin should conceive and bear a son; therefore, of course, supernaturally and

miraculously conceived. The explanation of so strange an event is in the name—Immanuel.

Remember, I am reading now from the prophecy of Isaiah—Jewish scripture—and not from the New Testament. The immaculate conception and Deity of Messiah is, therefore, an Old Testament doctrine. The New Testament merely confirms it.

And that doctrine, equally with all others, is to be received by faith. God makes the revelation clear enough; then it is to be believed. We know *what* it is—not always *how* it is. And how should it be otherwise? “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” And that is an absolutely necessary corollary to the postulate of a God. If His thoughts were no higher than my thoughts, He would be precisely of my dimensions, and I would not worship Him; neither would I give any heed to His book.

I will now turn to Isaiah ix:6, 7:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

This is the same Davidic personage, marked by his peculiar kingly right, for the passage proceeds:

“Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.”

Let me recapitulate for a moment:

(1). Messiah must be of the seed of Eve; that is to say, he must be human, a man. An angel cannot be Messiah. One of the Cherubim or Seraphim cannot be Messiah. Whatsoever else Messiah is, he is human.

(2). He must be the seed of Abraham; a Hebrew, not a Gentile.

(3). He must be of the line of Isaac and Jacob; not an Ishmaelite, nor an Edomite.

(4). He must be of the tribe of Judah—a Jew.

(5). He must be of the royal family of David, among the families of Judah. Even in Judah only David's family can produce him.

(6). He must be miraculously born of a virgin mother.

(7). He must be "Immanuel"—God with us; the mighty God, the everlasting Father.

But how can the mighty God, the everlasting Father, be also a man?

Where do these ideas ever come together again? In one of the four Gospels of the New Testament. There we find this statement. Understand me, I do not say an explanation, but a statement. God is not greatly concerned to explain Himself to us. This is the statement: "In the begining was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." John 1:1, 14.

And I submit that the statement is adequate and satisfying. If the mighty God chose to become "flesh," and to tabernacle among us it was, most evidently, within His power to do it.

III. Is there nothing in addition to this? Nothing, for instance, as to the time when Messiah should appear? It is evident that the time of the birth of Messiah is, if revealed, a very important mark of identification. I think if we look at the prophecy of Daniel, we shall find there a very clear revelation as to the time Messiah should appear. Daniel ix:21-23.

"Yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

And he informed me, and talked with me, and said O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou are greatly beloved; therefore understand the matter and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins."

Remember Israel was now under punishment from God—not cast off, but punished by captivity for national sins.

"And to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy."

That is, to finally bring in the time, of which I shall speak when the subject of the millennium is before us, when a restored Israel, in full fellowship with the God of their fathers, shall be the channel of His blessings to the earth.

"Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and three score and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary."

Now observe, between the time when Daniel was seeing visions and prophesying in Babylon, and the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A. D., the whole thing is limited. The coming of Messiah, and the cutting off of Messiah, must take place before the sweeping destruction of Jerusalem and the sanctuary. Whatever this seventy weeks means, it is a period (except the last week) that must fall between Daniel's time and the year A. D. 70, for since the year 70, there has been no sanctuary in Jerusalem. There the temple was destroyed in that year, and has never been rebuilt. Here then, is another vastly important condition. The Messiah must not only possess the unique personality which we have been considering, but He must appear between the

time when Daniel prophesied, say B. C. 538, and the time when Jerusalem was destroyed, A. D. 70. So much for the time-limit.

And now we come to another condition which Messiah must meet. The prophet Micah foretells the very place of his nativity:

But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (Micah v:2).

Here we have the Divine again. These words are plain and simple enough. Who is this ruler who is to come out of Bethlehem? It is He whose goings forth have been from everlasting.

Bear in mind now, that, to the seven marks of identity in our recapitulation of a few minutes ago, we must now add that Messiah must appear between B. C. 538, and A. D. 70, and that He must have Bethlehem-Ephratah for His birth place. So far all is clear.

IV. But the very passage from Daniel which furnished us with the time-limit suggested also a difficulty. Up to that point we have been reading about a sceptred one, a mighty king of David's line who was also the mighty God. But Daniel tells us distinctly that after a certain time "shall Messiah be cut off."

That raises a difficulty. What is this about a Divine King who is reigning victoriously over everything, being cut off, "but not for himself?" Now this difficulty is not to be explained away, for if we turn to Isaiah and the Psalms, we shall find a great deal of the same sort. See, for example, Isaiah lii:13:

"Behold my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

But is it Messiah of whom Isaiah is talking? Compare Zechariah iii:8:

"Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men wondered at; for behold I will bring forth my servant, the BRANCH."

What do we find David's son called throughout the prophets? Just these two names, "Branch" and "my servant." This certainly seems mysterious; here is Jehovah's Servant who is going to be extolled, exalted and very high, and yet his visage is to be more marred than any man. And the difficulty apparently gets more difficult as we go on. To return to Isaiah, read the liii. chapter 1-9.

Then we have the 22nd Psalm, which most commentators—Christian and some Jewish—agree is Messianic, with its despairing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" and its tragic burden of pierced hands and feet. Here we have then, on the one hand, a glorious king, in Himself Deity, so that He has all power, whose very name is Immanuel—"God with us;" yet, on the other hand, with His visage more marred than any man, His bones out of joint, dying with thirst, while His vesture is parted and lots cast for it. How can Messiah be a mighty King, and yet be such an abject sufferer? How can He be the great Davidic monarch restoring again the glory of Solomon's house, and also a sacrifice bearing the sins and iniquities of Israel and all the people? How can it be? Clearly, destinies so strongly contrasted could not be accomplished simultaneously. There is only one answer possible. There is but one word which can link the glorious reigning with the suffering and the death, and that word is "resurrection." Suppose that, in the divine purpose, the mighty drama is to be in two acts? Suppose the suffering Messiah and the glorious Messiah to be one, divided by death, reunited by resurrection? Suppose Messiah came, and was "cut off" as Daniel predicted, and sup-

pose that His life came again; then all the other and glorious side of the picture is still possible, is it not? If He did not come before A. D. 70, He can never come, and the prophets are false witnesses. If He came and died, and went into the grave and remained there, then God promised Israel and David something that He cannot perform; but if He came forth out of the grave, the earthly glory is all possible yet.

Well, you say, but is not the doctrine of the resurrection a New Testament doctrine? Is it not something that Christians invented to bridge this very difficulty, and make it possible to reconcile the prediction of Messiah's earthly greatness, with the predictions of His humiliation and death? No, indeed; resurrection is an Old Testament doctrine, as we shall presently see.

As a matter of belief you Christians—the great mass of you—practically reject the voluminous testimony of the prophets concerning the earthly glory and power of the Messiah “upon the throne of David” (Isa. ix:7); while you Jews—the great mass of you—will not receive the abundant testimony of your own prophets as to Messiah's humiliation and death. Against both of you there is levelled the reproach of Jesus: “O fools, and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken.” The truth is that resurrection is the bridge from Messiah's death to Messiah's glory, and that the Second Advent supplements and completes the first.

Now I want you to notice with me just two or three Old Testament passages upon the question of resurrection. Take, for instance, Job xix:25:

“For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

Job lived before the law, before the Pentateuch was written. Did not Job believe in resurrection? There was his body which was going to be food for worms, yet, said he,

"In my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

In the xvii. Psalm and 15th verse, we have David's faith in the resurrection:

"As for me," says David, "I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

The resurrection is not a new doctrine; it is as old as Job, and was David's hope. Now let us turn to the xvi. Psalm and see a promise concerning the Messiah. Many of the old rabbis, as well as commentators, interpret the xvi. Psalm of Messiah. I will read the eighth verse:

"I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

Here is not only the doctrine of the resurrection, but a definite promise that Messiah should be raised from the dead.

In Daniel xii:2, the matter becomes, if possible, more definite still:

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Daniel went to the grave with the promise that he should stand in his lot at the end of the days. Resurrection then is the word that bridges the whole difficulty, which reconciles the apparent contradiction of so many scriptures. In other words, Messiah comes; Messiah accomplishes all that is predicted of Him concerning suffering, humiliation and death; He rises from the grave, and comes again to set up the kingdom, and to complete the fulfillment of prophecy.

V. But, it may fairly be asked, is not this doctrine of a second advent of Messiah to restore the Davidic monarchy and make good the multitudinous unfulfilled promises to Israel a mere invention to bolster the Messianic claims of Jesus? In other words, is it clearly taught in Scripture?

Every Jew familiar with the words of the Prophets is aware that whatever else Messiah does He must restore Israel or leave the great mass of prediction concerning Him unfulfilled.

I turn to the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and begin at the sixth verse:

"When they, therefore, were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

Observe, the question was not at all as to whether He was going to restore the kingdom to Israel, but simply and only as to *when* He would do it.

Remember, before you begin to say "how carnal, how material, how unspiritual are these men! Will they *never* understand Jesus," that, indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John xx:22), with understandings opened to understand the Scriptures (Luke xxiv:45) they had been sitting forty days at the feet of the risen Lord while He taught them concerning kingdom truth (Acts 1:3). I think they had some advantages over our commentators in the matter of prophetic study. Evidently they felt their understanding of kingdom truth to be complete except at one point—the *time* of the restoration. Here is Jesus' answer:

"And he said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power."

Suppose one agent after another, fully authorized to speak for me, had promised in my behalf that at *some* time I would perform a certain action, and that, finally interrogated in person as to the *time* when I would perform that action I

should say: "I decline to speak upon that point," would it not be a monstrous perversion to say that I thereby discredited my agents, and that my words must be understood as announcing that I intended never to perform the act?

In the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles it is distinctly stated that after gathering out of the Gentiles a people for His name, He will return. Sixteenth verse:

"After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

Such is the Messianic doctrine.

And now we come to our final question, Was Jesus that Messiah?

No one questions that Jesus was of the family of David. In all the record of His life, where He was brought into sharpest controversy with those who rejected utterly His Messianic claims, that objection never was made that He was not of the line of David. No one ever denied that He was a descendant of Abraham, or of the tribe of Judah, or born in Bethlehem of Judea. Don't you see that the sure and simple way to settle forever the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah, if he were indeed an impostor, was in the power of those who were rigidly examining those claims? A disproof of his Davidic descent, or a disproof of his birth at Bethlehem, and every disciple would have left him at once.

Then again: Immediately—certainly within fifty days—after Jesus' death was accomplished, men went through Jerusalem and Judea preaching that He was risen from the dead. There, again, was an opportunity to end His cult by simply disproving the fact. Indeed, it never could have survived the disproof of even one of the eleven points of identification.

At the present time no man can either establish or disprove a claim to Davidic ancestry. For that reason alone, Messiah must have come before the genealogical registers were destroyed. In Christ's day the genealogical registers were open to all, and a Jewish man could prove his descent, but at present he cannot do so, therefore, the Messiah cannot appear for the first time now. Either the whole Messianic prophecy falls to the ground, or the Messiah has already appeared.

The historic facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth are notorious, simple, undisputed. See how the lines of proof, of identity, converge upon Jesus, and upon no one else.

1. He is a descendant of Eve—a Man.
2. He is the seed of Abraham, nay the very seed.
3. He derives His Abrahamic ancestry through Jacob, not Esau; Isaac, not Ishmael.
4. He is of the Tribe of Judah.
5. He is David's Son, and heir of the Davidic covenant.
6. He was miraculously conceived in the womb of a virgin.
7. He proved His Deity by works beyond the power of man; by superhuman holiness; by the resurrection from the dead, and by His influence upon the world.
8. He appeared at precisely the right time according to Daniel's prophecy.
9. He was born, against all human probability, in Bethlehem-Ephratah.
10. He fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah concerning His vicarious sacrifice.
11. He died in precisely the manner foretold in Psalm xxii. His hands and feet were pierced, and His executioners cast lots upon His raiment.

It is evident, (1) that no one could bring these signs upon himself; (2) that they are too numerous, specific and minute to leave an accidental fulfillment among the possibilities;

(3) that, therefore, the being in whom they all centre is the Messiah; and (4) that, since they all centre upon Jesus, it follows that He is Messiah.

And now, a closing word to you, my Jewish readers. Some of you are looking for Messiah. Well He is coming. That is the "blessed hope" of Jew, and Christian. Believe this, hold it fast, whatever betides. But I implore you by everything that you hold dear, believe also that He *has* come. The humiliation, the sacrificial death is accomplished; the glory is coming. Between now and that time when Messiah shall come in glory, how unspeakably solemn and important is the question of our personal relation to Him. My friends—Jew and Gentile alike—"there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved." The thought of a sinner ever reaching God's presence apart from sacrifice, is foreign to the whole of Scripture. What sacrifice can we offer? The temple is gone, the priesthood is gone, is there no sacrifice for us? Yes, there is; there is the sacrifice of Messiah. I claim it and need no other. Having believed in that sacrifice, and received Him as the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed—I await, in perfect peace, the time when He shall gloriously return to receive me to Himself, and to reign on the earth. I may die before that time comes; even so I shall go to Him by virtue of that sacrifice, trusting in His shed blood.

How is it with you? God has given you this chain of evidence, has affixed to that one person, among all the sons of men and sons of God, the marks of Messiah, will you now turn away from Him? Receive Him now. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Will you not say, and with heartfelt conviction: "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God."

The Great Tribulation.

The next prophetic period we are to consider is the "great tribulation." I am not aware that the theme is unusual—possibly unwelcome. Of late years two words have become naturalized in our English speech which express the two opposite ways men have of looking out upon the world and its problems; the words are optimist and pessimist. The former expresses the hopeful, expectant, cheerful attitude towards life; the latter has come to stand for fear, discouragement, timidity. The optimist is sure things will turn out right, however gloomy the immediate future may seem to be; the pessimist is sure things are bad, but not by any means so bad as they are going to be. You see, these are good and useful words. They are capable, however, of wrong uses. No Christian ought ever to be a pessimist. He is not of the night or of the darkness, but is a child of the day. To him belong the exceeding great and precious promises of God. He has a "blessed hope" and is an heir of glory. He is, therefore, by very necessity, an optimist.

But there is a shallow and senseless optimism which is not less unworthy the Christian than the gloomiest pessimism. To refuse to take due account of serious and menacing perils; to deliberately close the ears to the warnings of the sure word of prophecy; to say "peace and safety," when sudden destruction is impending over a guilty world, is worse than childish—it is criminal. And there is very much of that shallow and thoughtless optimism in the pulpit and religious press of our day.

From the point of view of this school Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; nay even Christ and the apostles, must be accounted pessimists.

The instructed Christian is an optimist, not because he shuts his eyes to evident perils, and to the warnings of the scriptures, but because, as a believer in those scriptures, he looks through and beyond the judgments which are swiftly coming upon the earth, to the sure triumph of Christ which lies beyond.

I invite your attention first of all to the following words of our Lord which form part of that discourse called, from the place where it was spoken, "The Olivet Discourse:"

"For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. xxiv:21, 22).

Many other references to this period of unexampled woe are found in the prophecies. The following may serve as examples:

"Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them" (Jer. xxx:7, 8).

Exposition is scarcely needed here. There cannot be two periods of unexampled tribulation. Jeremiah and Jesus, therefore, speak of the same period. The passages cannot refer to the last destruction of Jerusalem, for, while that was a time of Jewish trouble, the Jews were not saved out of it, but were slain by thousands and the remnants carried away into slavery. Neither was the Davidic monarchy restored at that time. Jesus says it is the "elect" who are in

the tribulation. Jeremiah tells us of whom Jesus speaks, namely, elect Jews. It is the time of Jacob's trouble. The period, then, is yet future.

To this period belong such passages as Isaiah xxxiv:1, 2.

"Come near, ye nations, to hear, and hearken, ye people; let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter."

The mere reading of these verses has, I doubt not, recalled to your minds many others of like import. The prophets, one and all, bear testimony to this time. It is the "yom Jehovah," the "day of the Lord" so frequently mentioned in all the prophets. Of such mention the following passages may serve as examples:

"Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand: a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains" (Joel ii:1, 2).

"Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle" (Zech. xiv:1, 3).

Now, before I enter upon this special subject, permit me, first of all, to recall to those of you who have been following this series of addresses on prophetic truth the two or three things which have been established, I trust, by what has been said previously, so that we may have a point of connection and of departure.

The first proposition was that this age ends in catastrophe; this age ends in judgment; this age ends in woe; not, as some would have us believe, by the gradual process of

evolution, lifting the race higher and higher until it passes by insensible gradations, into a state of blessedness and peace, but in sudden and awful ruin, making necessary a complete reconstruction of human government, and of the whole social economy of the earth.

As to the events in which this present dispensation ends, you will remember that we saw from the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter iv:16-18, that the first in the succession of these events is the taking away from the earth of all who are Christ's, that is to say, of the real church composed of true believers since the crucifixion.

"The Lord himself," says Paul, "shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

You will remember that the notion, somewhat prevalent in these days, that the resurrection is the simultaneous coming forth of all who have gone into the grave, is, from the standpoint of the Scripture, a mistake. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, but every man in his own order; first, Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming."

Not "all the dead," but "they that are Christ's." Now I proceed with the quotation from I. Thessalonians: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

And truly, dear friends, when we come, as I trust we shall in a few minutes, to look over into that awful period which immediately follows the taking away of the church from the earth, we ought to find comfort in the promise that we shall be kept "out of the hour of temptation which shall come upon the earth to try those that dwell therein." (Rev. iii:10.)

If only true Christians are taken it follows that enormous

numbers, not only in heathendom, but in what we call Christendom—that is, the part of the earth where Christianity is the predominant religion—would be left behind. It is evident, too, that many who would be thus left are counted by the statisticians among Christians. When some optimist of the shallow sort tells you that Protestant Christians number 200,000,000, you will do well to remember that in countries where Protestantism is the established religion—the state church—all the inhabitants are counted as Protestants.

Every soul in infidel Germany figures as a Protestant Christian in these lists; and so does every Englishman, even every Irishman, because Ireland is part of a Protestant kingdom. Similarly every Frenchman, Italian and Spaniard is counted as a Catholic.

Out of Protestantism, Romanism, the Greek church, those who are Christ's are taken—all others remain to pass through the great tribulation.

The second point which I trust has been established by that which has gone before, and of which I will remind you so that we may have the ground clear, is that the end of this age is not the end of the world. I pointed out to you that the two passages where the end of this age seems to synchronize with the end of the world are badly translated in our version. I refer to the passages in the 13th of Matthew. And here let me say: when I make corrections in the rendering of passages I make only those which are admitted by all scholars, of all schools, of all denominations—not something I think necessary to prove my point. If I call a rendering in the King James version incorrect, I do it on the authority of all critical scholars. I will not treat you disingenuously, nor ask you to accept my opinions about renderings.

The world, then, does not end for more than 1000 years after this age ends. The tribulation and the millennium must run their course first.

One more prefatory remark. We shall not understand the prophetic testimony concerning the period which is before us unless we understand that after the end of the church age—after the true believers, according to the doctrine of the 15th of First Corinthians and 4th of First Thessalonians, are taken away from the earth—God takes up Israel again. Indeed, to understand that is fundamental to the understanding of all unfulfilled prophecy. There is a widespread impression that Israel is cut off forever. We have fallen into an evil habit of so called “spiritualizing” the prophecies.

In proof of the truth that when the church age is ended by the taking away of those who are Christ's, God again takes up the Jew and begins to deal with Israel, let me read but two or three passages. I turn to the prophecy of our Lord from Mount Olivet speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke xxi:24): “And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Romans xi:25: “I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved. As it is written, there shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”

Then, again, in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, verses 14-17—that great passage which settles so many difficulties: “Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name.” A statement which answers precisely to the fact, for He has never yet converted every Gentile anywhere. Not, needless to say, because He does not want to; nor because His heart does not yearn for every Gentile, but because every Gentile will not have Christ. But He is taking out of the Gentiles, by the preaching of the Gospel, a people for His name.

What follows? "*After this, I will return* and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up."

I trust you now see these three things as clearing the ground; perhaps I have taken unnecessary time to get the ground clear:

1. This age ends in disaster.
2. The end of this age is not the end of the world.
3. When this age ends God takes up Israel once more.

We come now to our Lord's prediction of a time of unexampled tribulation.

Think for a moment. There was present to His mind all that had taken place on the earth—all the desolation, caused by all the wars; the downfall of cities and the butchering of the inhabitants, the famines and pestilences, the cruelties, the tears and anguish that had been in the world up to that time, and, looking back upon it all, He says in effect: "The time of trouble I tell you about will be greater than anything that has ever occurred." Then looking forward to the history of the world since then—a time filled with anger and strife—looking forward upon that time, He declares that the time of trouble of which He speaks shall be a time of greater trouble than anything which the earth will see until it comes to pass. We have, then, in our Lord's prediction alone a fearful prophecy even if we were unable to fill in the details from portions of scripture elsewhere.

But our Lord's prediction does not stand alone. Not to speak of the abundant testimony of the Old Testament prophets, out of which I have already given citations, we have in the New Testament considerably more than half of the last of its books devoted to the details of this period. And not only so, but many of the epistles have references to the same epoch.

The entire period is described in the Revelation, chap-

ters vi-xix. As you know these chapters describe three series of judgments unfolding successively: the seals, the trumpets and the vials; each succeeding judgment increasing in severity. Of what do these seals, trumpets, vials—twenty-one in number—consist?

Let me swiftly summarize the events. The period begins with the taking away of the church and the removal of all divine restraint upon man. Already in the Apostle's time, there was a working of iniquity and lawlessness. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work, but there is one that hindereth" (2 Thess. ii.). There is restraint, divinely interposed.

We never see fully here what is latent in the human heart, because we live under vast systems of repression, but after the taking away of the church all restraint is removed. God withdraws His hindering hand and permits this thing which we call human nature, and think so magnificent, to show what it really is. I am very tired of pulpit laudations of human nature. When I turn to God's book I find no single commendatory word regarding it. It is always spoken of in sadness, because of its weakness and folly, and always with stern warning of the evil that lies latent in the heart of man.

Instantly, when the restraint is removed, there is universal war. Rev. vi:1-4. If you were to ask me what I think hinders, strangely and mysteriously, the breaking out of the awful war which Europe has been expecting for the past seven years, the armies there ever growing larger, coming more and more into perfect training and perfect equipment, the very sovereigns, themselves, not knowing why the war does not break out, I would say that I believe God is restraining the war until He is ready to take His own out of the world. However that may be, the first thing that transpires after the church is taken away is the breaking out of universal war, and then "peace is taken from the earth," so

that any man who has a private grudge against another man kills him.

Suppose that all restraint were removed from the city of Paris while I am speaking. Before to-morrow's sun sets her streets would run red with blood, and be piled high with corpses. And what is true of Paris is true of every city and town and village. Men hate each other enough now to kill each other, but for various reasons they do not think it expedient.

What follows the war is famine; following that, pestilence; then anarchy.

In the midst of "this beginning of sorrows," as Christ calls it in the xxiv chapter of Matthew, a vast number of Jews turn to Jesus as their Messiah. That is the key to all that follows. From that moment, God's eye is upon those suffering Jews who have turned to Him and are receiving Jesus, though unseen yet, as their Messiah. He was rejected away back yonder by their fathers, but now in the awful trouble that has come upon the earth, they turn to Him. These believing Jews are the "brethren" of Matt. xxv:40.

Did you ever notice that in Matthew xxiv, after speaking of the tribulation and His own second coming, our Lord gives the parable of the fig tree? "When its branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." The fig tree is everywhere and always a symbol of Israel. According to that parable we are to watch the fig tree, not for the fullness of leaves but for the first starting buds: the first indications of renewed life in Israel, religiously and nationally. Are there any buds upon the fig tree to-day? Note that a large and ever increasing number of Jews in Russia and elsewhere have already received Jesus as Messiah. What else? They are flocking back to the Holy Land, where, according to prophecy, a remnant must be at the beginning of the great tribulation. Only to-day I saw in a newspaper the statement that increasing numbers

of Jews are going to the Levant, to Joppa, to Constantinople—feeling their way back, blindly, to their own land. My readers, watch the fig tree! When you see these first buds, you know that the time is at hand.

In the vii of Revelations, immediately following this beginning of sorrows, there is an interlude; there is a kind of pause in the movement of things. A command is sent to the angels who have power to hurt the earth, saying: "Hurt not the earth until I have sealed the servants of my God in their foreheads." I never think of that vii of Revelation without joy in my heart.

Let me read one or two passages. After describing the "elect" of Israel (verses 4-8) we read:

"After this, I beheld, and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands."

I was brought up to believe that if I ever got to be a Christian I would some day be one in that multitude. Not so; this is a great mistake.

The chapter contains an explicit statement on that very point. The identity of the 144,000 out of every tribe of Israel is, of course, indisputable. As for the innumerable multitude of Gentiles, here is the statement:

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of the great tribulation" (Rev. vii: 13, 14).

Observe, it is not "great tribulation." Look at the passage in the Greek, or in the Revised Version, and you will find it "the" great tribulation.

But how blessed to know that even after the church period ends an innumerable host will be saved! They must go

through the tribulation, but they will be saved. They cannot belong to the bride and body of Christ, but they will be "before his throne, and serve him day and night in his temple." This is not "second probation." *That* is the unscriptural notion that the gospel will be offered to men in hades.

Then follow the series of events called the trumpet judgments. There is a significant thing about these. Divine wrath is mingled with the outworking of human wickedness. Up to this time, all through the opening of the seals, as they are called, it is simply the unrestrained manifestation of that which is already latent in human nature. Now the Divine wrath is manifested and the distress and anguish become unspeakable (Rev. viii:ix). It would be impossible to pack into words symbols of more intense woe and of more absolute anguish than are used in connection with the trumpets and vials. Through it all a world-wide preaching is carried on, mainly by the Jews.

Did you ever think how well prepared that magnificent people is for world-wide preaching? If you and I were to endeavor to organize a force to carry a certain message into all the world we would have a great deal of preparation to go through. There would be innumerable languages to learn and various other things. My friends, the Jew is everywhere now; the Jew knows every language now; the Jew is acclimated in every country now; the Jew knows the habits of every people now, and not only is he the ablest, most sagacious man in the world, but the Jew has the money to do it with.

How long would it take Israel to evangelize the earth? A sober and very conservative estimate which has been made shows that it would be possible for the living Israelites to carry any particular message to every creature on this earth in three years if they wanted to. I have always loved God's ancient people, and I rejoice to know from the prophets that this mission is a part of their glorious future.



While this world-wide preaching is going on the "two witnesses"—Moses and Elijah probably—are testifying at Jerusalem.

Just here, according to Revelation xii:10-12, Satan, himself, appears upon the scene, "having great wrath because he knows his time is short." The first effect of his appearance is singular: instantly there is order. There is a sudden transformation from turbulence, disorder and anarchy to settled government once more. There is instantly a reconstruction of civil order over the whole prophetic earth under a monarchial form, ten confederated kings selecting or choosing one of their number as the supreme king or emperor, with his capital at Rome. Then we have the revived Roman empire.

If we turn now to Revelation xiii., we find two beasts mentioned—the beast out of the sea, and the beast out of the earth. The first is the head of civil power: the other the head of ecclesiastical power. After this—the inevitable reaction from anarchy—follows the most absolute despotism over the whole earth—ecclesiastical tyranny, civil tyranny—and the civil head of it all demanding to be worshipped as God!

In the meantime the *disjecta membra* of apostate chirstendom have gathered into a confederacy which is nominally Christian, but which God calls "Babylon"—Babel meaning "confusion"—a greater parliament of religions. And now comes the last great tragedy. The civil power, the restored Roman empire in its final ten-kingdom form, turns at last upon "Babylon," the intolerable mass of mock-religious worldliness and corruption, and utterly destroys it.

The beast out of the sea (the emperor-despot), the beast out of the earth (the "anti-Christ," "man of sin," "false prophet"), left alone, turns savagely upon Israel. Jerusalem is once more beleaguered and in utter extremity when Messiah appears in power and great glory with saints and angels. He delivers His ancient people, casts the beast and false

prophet alive into the lake of fire, chains Satan for one thousand years, holds the great assize of living nations (Matt. xxiv:31-46), judging them according to their treatment of Israel in all her long wanderings, and sets up His millennial kingdom.

It remains to ask: What will be the duration of this period?

I think seven years. If you will follow the line of proof I think this can be made clear. The ninth chapter of Daniel contains a prediction that seventy periods of time called "weeks" must elapse after the King of Babylon gives commandment to rebuild Jerusalem (the Jews, remember, were then in captivity under Babylon), before the final establishment of Israel under the holy anointed one. Then follows the announcement that after sixty-nine "weeks" Messiah shall be cut off. Now from the date of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem to the crucifixion was exactly sixty-nine weeks of years. Each of the sixty-nine "weeks" up to the crucifixion was seven years long.

Here, then, are sixty-nine weeks fulfilled and another week cut off—left in the air, as it were. Now there is a great principle concerning prophetic chronology. God never reckons time with the Jews when they are out of their own land. Then there is always an interlude. With Israel out of the land, God's Jewish clock stops. It begins again when Israel is back where Israel ought to be. Now, at the end of the sixty-ninth week, Messiah was cut off and the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the Jews followed. Just then, between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks of Daniel, comes in this age—the church period.

There are scriptures after scriptures to which I might refer you which show that this whole church period is a parenthesis, as it were.

In God's purpose always, but hidden, as Paul tells us, from the prophets of old time. There is a very notable illus-

tration of that in Isaiah. It is the passage from which our Lord quoted in the synagogue at Nazareth, Isaiah lxi:1.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

You will remember how our Lord at the beginning of His ministry quoted this very passage (Luke iv:16-21), and went on to proclaim the "acceptable year of the Lord." There He closed the book and sat down and began to say, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your midst." Did you ever notice where He closed the book? He closed the book at a comma. The whole church period comes in right where that little comma is—between "the acceptable year of the Lord," and "the day of vengeance of God"—between the cutting off of Messiah at the end of the sixtieth week of Daniel and the taking up of Israel again, when "the day of vengeance"—the great tribulation—begins.

When the church period has been finished and God, according to the passages I have read, begins again to deal with Israel, namely at the beginning of the great tribulation, then the clock of prophecy begins to run again and the seventieth week has its fulfillment. The sixty-nine weeks were weeks of years. We are sure then that the seventieth week will be a week of years. We want to remember, though, that it is shortened somewhat—it will not be a full week. Our Lord says: "Except those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved." Not "no soul" should be saved; it is not a question of soul-saving. It is shortened because there will then be in the world those whom He calls the "elect," Israel beloved for the fathers' sakes.

Such, swiftly and most inadequately generalized, is the "great tribulation." As the next and nearest of the great prophetic periods—possibly so near that the larger part of the present population of the earth will perish in its un-

speakable and indescribable horrors—it should claim from all of you immediate and most serious consideration.

If you are Christ's, surely there should be in the nearness of this awful period an added incentive to untiring, unsparing effort to bring Christ savingly to the inhabitants of the earth. Surely no missionary motive can be more imperative, more insistent than this.

If any of you who read these words are out of Christ, may I not implore you to make haste into that blessed ark of safety? Be sure of this, dear friends, "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained;" and remember that "that day cometh as a snare upon all them that dwell upon the earth." I beseech you, count me not as an alarmist. I do solemnly warn you that that great and terrible day is impending over you. If prophets of smooth things are saying to you "peace and safety," remember that it is precisely then "when sudden destruction cometh." Remember the warning of our Lord:

"For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

May the Spirit of God help you to accept Christ *now*.



The Millennium.

We are to look now at the teachings of the Scriptures concerning the millennium. The word signifies simply a period of one thousand years. In itself it means no more than that, and is derived from the repeated measure of time given to this period in the xx:1-6 chapter of Revelation.

In this we have a period of one thousand years mentioned four times, coinciding in the prophetic order with the time of blessedness on this earth under the personal reign of Messiah long ago foretold by the Old Testament prophets.

So much for the word. It is to be regretted, however, that this word "millennium" ever supplanted the old Biblical word "kingdom." A great many misconceptions that are in the minds of people might, perhaps, never have been there if we had always referred to this period as the kingdom period—the time when the kingdom of heaven foretold by the prophets will have its manifestation.

I have no doubt that most of us when we pray "thy kingdom come" really have in our minds the wish that there may be more people converted. Some perhaps, mean the bringing in of that time of which we have been told (but not by Scripture) when all the people in the world will be members of the church. Scripture, as we have abundantly seen in the previous articles, never speaks of a time *in this age* when the whole world would be a converted world; it is always in the kingdom age that every intelligence is to be subject to God; and that is what our Lord had in mind when He told us to pray "thy kingdom come"—the kingdom foretold by the prophets; the time when the earth "shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord."

Remember that the Scriptures always distinguish between the church and the kingdom. Let me, just rapidly, give some distinctions which you yourselves may verify by recourse to your Bibles.

In the first place, then, we have in Scripture the expression "the kingdom of God," and indeed, we may say that the expression gives its own definition. It includes whatever God rules over; whatever intelligences, in any world or in any sphere, are willingly subject to the rule of God. If there are to-night, in the most distant star, intelligent beings who submit themselves to the rule and will of God, there the kingdom of God is established, there the kingdom of God exists.

Then, secondly, we have "the kingdom of heaven" mentioned in Scripture. That is, so to speak, a more limited term; it refers to this period which we have come to call the millennium. The "kingdom of God" is a great inclusive expression, which takes in the whole sphere where God rules. The "kingdom of heaven" is the establishment, through Christ, of God's righteous reign on the earth; it is always limited to the earth, that is its sphere—though glorified saints of this and past ages are concerned with it.

Thirdly, we have the church. The church is composed of those who are saved, mostly out of the Gentiles, between the first and second advents of the Lord Jesus Christ; more strictly speaking, between the day of Pentecost and that day when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. iv:16, 17). Between those two points, the day of Pentecost and the descent of the Lord into the air for the saints of this dispensation, the church is gathered out.

The Apostle Paul says, you remember, that the church

was a mystery hidden from the Old Testament writers. To him was given the unfolding of that mystery, and he tells us that the Church is the body of Christ and the bride of Christ. The saints who compose it are kings and priests, and to them is reserved the unique distinction of reigning with Him "over the earth."

"Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign over the earth" (Rev. v:9, 10).

Notice the limitation of the reigning of the saints. We shall not reign in heaven; we shall not reign in that wide sphere which is called the kingdom of God, but we shall reign over the earth.

Pardon me if I dwell yet a moment upon these distinctions, for they are fundamental to any clear understanding of the Scriptures. The kingdom of God is the great inclusive term. The kingdom of heaven has its full manifestation in the thousand years' reign of Christ over the earth. The church is a distinct body of saved ones between Pentecost and the descent of the Lord into the air just before the great tribulation, who are to be associated with Him in the rule when the kingdom of heaven is set up.

The kingdom of heaven is in the kingdom of God, but it does not follow that the two terms are synonymous. For example, the State of Texas is in the United States, but it is not the United States. Because it is in the United States it has much in common with the United States. It has the same president; the same constitution is the supreme law, the same language is spoken, but it would be mere confusion to speak of the State of Texas and the United States interchangeably. The kingdom of Scotland is in Great Britain, but it is not Great Britain.

The kingdom of heaven is in the kingdom of God. Therefore, we may expect to find in the Scriptures a great many

things which are common to the kingdom of heaven and we cannot make apply interchangeably to both.

The church is in the kingdom of God, but the church is not the kingdom of God; neither is the church the kingdom of heaven, although for a time the church is to be in the kingdom of heaven. The church is in the kingdom of heaven which is in the kingdom of God, just as the royal family of Great Britain, for instance, may be said to be in the kingdom of Great Britain. The church is a body of royal priests called out during this dispensation to be co-rulers with the King over the millennial earth during a period of 1,000 years and to be forever with Him after that period is ended. I trust the ground is now clear so we may come to some questions.

I. First of all, when does the millennium begin? The answer is that it begins immediately after the great tribulation has run its course—that period of time which was the subject of the last article. Immediately after the great tribulation the Lord Jesus returns in power and glory to this earth and sets up the millennial kingdom. Let me read one or two passages upon that point:

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv:29, 30).

When? "Immediately after the tribulation of those days."

You perceive the distinction between this coming of the Lord in power and great glory to the earth, *after* the period called the "great tribulation," and that other coming of the Lord into the air to take away His own *before* the tribulation. That coming is immediately after the tribulation. One is visible only to those who are caught up to meet the Lord

in the air. It will be known to the dwellers on the earth only by the absence of those who have been taken. The other coming shall be "as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west;" it will be witnessed by all tongues and nations and will be for them an awful event. That, certainly, is clearly established by the words of the Lord Himself.

II. In the second place let us trace from Scripture the order of events in the establishment of this millennial kingdom.

Here I shall confine myself almost entirely to the inspired words, and I am sure I need make no apology for reading upon such a subject as this exclusively from Scripture. It would be mere impertinence for me or any other man to ask his fellow-mortals to hear his theories about the future. We do not know, except as God has revealed it, what may occur one hour hence: To Scripture, then, we turn to learn how the millennium will be introduced.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no one knew but Himself. And He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God" (Rev. xix:11-13).

Who is this personage?

You know that in the first chapter of the Gospel of John we have precisely this name, "the Word," applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." A little later we read: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory."

Where is Jesus now? In heaven, at the right hand of the Father. In the passage read we see, prophetically, through

the vision of the apocalyptic seer, the moment when heaven is opened, and Jesus Christ, "the Word" issues forth, not now to become the babe of Bethlehem, the man of Calvary, but armed as for war, "His vesture dipped in blood."

And next the prophets describe the arrival of the Lord Jesus with the "armies of heaven" (Rev. xxix:14) upon the earth. It is the time when the seventieth week of Daniel, anti-Christ's week, the "great tribulation," ends. Against the Jewish remnant in Jerusalem is gathered the host of the beast and false prophet.

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up; beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning-hooks into spears. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about" (Joel iii:9-11).

"For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle," etc. (Zech. xiv:2).

"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse and against His army" (Rev. xix:19).

Just at this crisis the Lord appears in glory and delivers the beleaguered Jewish saints.

"And I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them until the Ancient of days came" (Dan. vii:21, 22).

"Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against these nations as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, * * * and the Lord shall be king over all the earth" (Zech. xiv:3, 4, 9).

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image" (Rev. xix:20).

"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. xx:1, 2).

Now keep the connection. We have seen in the vision of John on the Isle of Patmos, heaven opened and the Lord descending with His mighty ones to the earth. He comes at a time of crisis on the earth, when the saints who have turned to Him during the tribulation are at their utmost extremity, and delivers them. He wins the great final victory.

The next act in the mighty drama is the re-gathering of dispersed Israel. A remnant has been in the land through the tribulation, but now the nation is to be brought back. Observe, as I read the Scriptures, how this follows the coming of the king:

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer. xxiii:5).

Not in Heaven. It is not a question of the reigning of God in heaven. His throne is in the heavens, and it has never been shaken and never can be; but here we have the promise that in David's great Son there shall be one who will reign and execute judgment and justice in the earth. Let me ask: Did He do anything of that kind when He came before? Was there any reigning in prosperity of the one of whom, it is said, He was crucified through weakness; that He had "not where to lay His head," so that the very fowls of the air and the foxes of the earth were better off than He? Was there any fulfillment of this promise then? Do you not see that the fulfillment of this prediction imperatively requires the return of David's Son to this earth?

III. In Matthew xxv:31 to 34, we have the next event in order; "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him; then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and He shall

set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

So it is that class upon His right hand which forms the Gentile nucleus of the population of the millennial earth. Those upon His left hand go away into eternal punishment. The basis of judgment is the treatment they have accorded His "brethren," the believing Jewish remnant during the tribulation just closed.

I am perfectly well aware that this judgment of the xxv. of Matthew—the judgment that our Lord Himself declares to be the judgment of the "nations"—has been confounded in the minds of many with the judgment of the great white throne recorded in the xx. of Revelation. But surely no one need make that confusion. Note, first, the difference in time of the two judgments. The judgment of the living nations takes place when Christ comes in glory. The judgment of the great white throne takes place after a thousand years of His presence on the earth. Note again, that in the judgment of the great white throne only "the dead" are raised and stand before God. In the judgment of the xxv. of Matthew there is no resurrection at all; it is simply a judgment of the "nations."

It should ever be borne in mind that these prophecies deal with the nations of christendom, to whom the gospel has gone.

What follows? "In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely" (Jer xxiii:6).

Did that happen when the Lord was here before? On the contrary we know that almost immediately after his final rejection and crucifixion, the Roman armies came up to Jerusalem and destroyed the city with nearly half of the inhabitants and carried away into captivity the remainder. Nothing in all the calamitous history of this wonderful city

was so terrible as was the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. But read again Jerem. xxiii:7-8.

Is not that explicit enough? Has that ever been fulfilled? Remember a remnant of the Jews are to be in the land during the great tribulation when they turn to the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. When He comes back, it is first of all for their deliverance; then, for the judgment of the Gentiles, according to their treatment of Israel.

It is such a wonderful regathering!

"It shall no more be said, The Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt."

That was a wonderful deliverance. To an old shepherd, an old Jewish man eighty years old, with just a shepherd's staff, without a soldier or a spear, to bring those millions of slaves out from under the power of the mightiest monarch of those times was wonderful. You remember the divided waters of the Red Sea and Israel passing through and into the wilderness dry-shod; and how, forty years after, the waters of Jordan were parted asunder and they passed into their own land dry-shod. I repeat that these were wonderful deliverances, yet so much greater and more marvellous will be the coming deliverance of Israel that, so to speak, the wonders of the first exodus and deliverance will be forgotten.

Then, in "the wilderness of the people," Jesus meets them and they receive Him as the Christ.

That introduces the millennium.

Now remember that nearly a thousand million of the souls now living have never heard the gospel. To them, or to so many as may at that time be unevangelized, Israel becomes a missionary nation.

"And it shall come to pass that as ye were a curse among heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, in those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have

heard that God is with you. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord" (Zech. viii:13-23).

And so, at last, there is a converted world, but it is in the kingdom of heaven, not in the church.

You know how wonderfully the whole period from the rejection of our Lord at His first coming, to the full blessing of the earth at His second coming, is bridged in Acts xv:14-17.

IV. What will be the form of government, and what the order of society during the millennium?

The government will be a theocracy. It will be the ruling of God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, over the earth:

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth" (Jer. xxiii:5).

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father, David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke i:30-33).

Here the question is answered as to the form of government—a theocracy.

Where will be the seat of that government? I will read from Isaiah ii:1-4, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." (Not concerning Washington, or London, or Paris, or Vienna, or Berlin, but concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Let us, at least, take it for granted that the Spirit of God knew how to dictate His messages):

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go

up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Jerusalem then is to be the seat of the government.

As to the national order, I will not weary you with quotations. Suffice it to say that Israel has the first place among nations during the millennium. Did you ever think that at the present time the nations are a headless body; that there is no chief nation now? We cannot point to one nation and say, that is the head. The claim would instantly be contested. To-day Gentileism, the whole sphere of the Gentile world, is divided up, localized, with no nation at the head; and there never will be any nation at the head again until Israel is the head. We could abundantly prove that from the prophets.

The theocracy, or the rule of Christ over the whole earth during the millennium, is made effective in this way: First, He says in Isaiah i:26 of Israel: "And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning; afterward, thou shalt be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City;" and to the apostles He said: "When the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. xix:28). The office of judge in Israel, as you know, was not a judicial office, as we have it, but an administrative office.

As to the manner of the governing of Gentile nations during the millennium, we gather a hint from the xix. chapter of Luke. We read that a certain nobleman goes into a far country to receive a kingdom, and to return, etc. After a long time the nobleman, having received the kingdom, returns and then he reckons with his ser-

vants. To one who had received ten pounds and had gained other ten pounds, the king says: "Well done, good and faithful servant, have thou authority over ten cities." Do you catch the idea? Where is this authority to be exercised? Up in heaven! Are there a great many cities in heaven? On the contrary, heaven is one city. It could not be anywhere but on the earth. Then we have in Hebrews the distinct statement that "Unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world—or age—to come, but unto us." We have, in short, this thought: The administration of the kingly authority of Christ over the earth during the millennium is through restoration of the administrative office of judge over Israel, and through the personal service of saints in their glorified bodies over the Gentiles; the heavens and the earth, so to speak, come together during that period of one thousand years.

V. What will be the condition of the earth during that period?

When the prophets paint the picture of the millennial earth, they dip their pencils in the rainbow. You know how incomparably beautiful their descriptions are, considered simply as poetry.

Hear Isaiah: "For there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes; neither reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor."

Dear friends, it is a very hard thing for the poor to get judgment with righteousness now. Just as difficult a

thing as it is to give judgment with righteousness to a millionaire. What a blessed time it will be when the poor get their rights:

"And reprove with equity for the meek of the earth, and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked."

That is to say, while on the one hand it is a condition of tranquillity, blessedness and peace; on the other hand it is instant destruction of the insubordinate or rebellious. We are living in a time when God is forbearing with wicked men; it is the time of His patience. The millennium is the "kingdom and the power of the Lord Jesus Christ," and whatever wickedness shows itself is instantly judged.

Even the nature of the animal kingdom is to be changed. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

There was no ferocity among what we call wild beasts in the garden of Eden. Ferocity has come in with the fall; all creation fell with man. We learn that from the viii. of Romans. We learn, too, that it is going to be delivered out of the bondage or corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

"And the cow and the bear shall feed; and their young ones shall lie down together and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Is not that beautiful?

"And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious."

That is just one of the little prophetic pictures of the

condition of things during the millennium. Of this age of blessedness the prophets give picture after picture. I will let you look them up for yourselves. Let me turn only to Romans viii:19-21:

"For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God."

Creation delivered! Creation set free! All the forces that we feel somehow, vaguely, all about us, which we cannot grasp, mighty energies of nature, all are to be put to the service of man.

You ask what will be the manner of worship on the millennial earth? Ezekiel describes to us, not only the distribution of the Holy Land to the tribes of Israel, but the erection of the magnificent millennial temple. There are to be offerings, memorial sacrifices, not expiatory sacrifices. Zechariah adds another significant truth with regard to the Gentile nations: "And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which come against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. xiv:16).

Pilgrimages out of all the nations of the earth wending their way annually to that most magnificent city, as it will then be, the centre of the millennial earth's splendor, civilization and worship. Every eye directed there to the worship of the King, the Lord of *Hosts*.

Now, in conclusion, are you asking me to tell you what is to be the end of all this? Alas, dear friends, one shrinks from opening that page, but it must be. Is it then to be ever true that man, tried in every way, is a failure? It has been true, has it not? Man, put in the garden of Eden,

in a paradise where every right wish was anticipated, disobeyed the only command God gave him, and his life there closed in judgment; he was expelled. That man's descendants became so wicked that it was mercy to blot them out by the great judgment of the flood.

Again there was the dispersion caused by the confusion of tongues at Babel. Was it not judgment that sent them forth wanderers over the whole earth? Then, the Lord finally sent His Son—perfect loveliness—into the world. He was spiked to a cross. The world had that as a deathbed for the Son of God. The picture which the prophets give to the close of this present age repeats the same story of apostasy, turning finally to the anti-Christ, the man of sin; all the world wondering after the beast, and judgment closing this age. And so will close the millennial age. "And when the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (Rev. xx:7, 8).

No sooner is Satan loosed than he finds a vast multitude ready, as now, to obey him and to believe his lie rather than God's truth. After a thousand years of the manifestation of perfect righteousness and perfect peace and perfect blessing on the earth, there is still latent in the human heart that pride which is ready to become insubordinate to so gentle a ruler as Jesus.

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them."

That is the last of the earth judgments.

"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. And I saw a great

white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them."

This is not the judgment of the living nations when the Lord comes. That is on earth, this is in space; the heaven and the earth have fled away.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev. xx:9-15).

Then what?

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev. xxi:1).

The long, strange, tragic drama of earth finished—eternity begun.



The Future State.

In previous articles I have traced the prophetic history of time to its end. We are now to look at what lies beyond time, in eternity. Only revelation can speak here. Of that which is past, history may tell some broken and imperfect story. Of that which lies in the immediate future, the signs of the times may give us some premonition, but when we seek to pass beyond time and beyond signs; when we would know the eternal state, we can know only that which God has revealed.

Science cannot help us. The utmost word of science is that it is unscientific and irrational to infer that physical death is the cessation of all life. We see that other forces survive changes of form, and it is not according to analogy to say that the force which we call life, and which has its manifestation for a few years in the mortal body, ceases with the change which we call death. That is the message of science. How unsatisfactory it is after all. If we die we shall live again! But how shall we live, and where shall we live? Do our choices here affect our destiny there? These are the questions that spring to the lips and demand an answer; and these questions are not speculative merely; they have the most direct bearing upon character and conduct.

"If a man die, shall he live again?" There is something in us that craves completeness. We do not go very far in this life before we find that incompleteness marks the most fortunate human life; defeated aspiration, imperfect achievement, the soul reaching out for things which the hand cannot grasp. So we ask, is there another sphere beyond where the incompleteness of this life may find there rounding out and fulness?

We follow our beloved dead down to the grave, and as we lay away all that is tangible and visible of them, we ask over each new made mound, "If a man die, shall he live again?" The affection, which we would fain believe to be of God, reaches out empty arms into the beyond. Love leaps over the little trench which we call a grave, and we stand there asking the question, is there life beyond? Is this the end, or may we presently take up the interrupted fellowship in some happier sphere?

"Where softer suns shed a serener light,
And milder moons imparadise the night?"

There is another question which demands an answer: Is this life determinative of the life beyond? If this life is determinative of the life beyond, then the eternal state takes rank at once as the mightiest of all influences in the formation of character and the determination of conduct. Everything begins to take color from it, if we believe it. I repeat that the questions we ask concerning the hereafter are not speculative questions.

Is there, then, an answer? If we will turn to Scripture, friends, we shall find an answer. Not an answer which meets every idle curious surmise, but an answer which does satisfy, if it is received, every legitimate question of the soul. I am not aware that any who have come with a serious purpose to seek the Bible answer to the questions concerning the hereafter, have ever complained of its inadequacy.

It is true that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Numberless questions might be asked concerning the future of saint or sinner which are not answered in Scripture. In a very real sense "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Very true. But, on the other hand, enough is told to give rest to the mind. "We know," says John, "that when He shall appear, we shall be like

Him." That is heaven anywhere; to be with Christ, and like Christ. Turning, then, to consider what is revealed concerning the hereafter, we shall find that the message of the Bible lies partly in its doctrinal statements, and partly in its prophetical unfoldings.

And here, as in former discourses in this series, the very volume of truth compels me to summarize. It would be impossible, even within the very liberal limit of time which you are accustomed to give me here on Sunday nights, to present to you in its detail all the testimony of Scripture concerning the future state. I shall, therefore, summarize it in a series of propositions, reading from the Scriptures which establish the truth of these propositions.

I. The first of these summary propositions is this: *Death is neither the cessation of existence nor of consciousness.*

Let me repeat that. The first answer which Scripture makes to the question as to what lies beyond death, is, that physical death—the death of the body—is neither the end of life nor of consciousness. That is, there is something which lives after the body dies, and that something is in full possession of consciousness. In proof of this, I will quote, first of all, from the xvi. chapter of Luke, the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is His own hand which lifts the veil here and permits us to see that which occurs beyond death, both to one who died unreconciled to God, and to one who was His child.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried, and in hades, he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom."

Perhaps you are saying: Yes, this is a parable. In the first place, I do not know of anything which authorizes you to call it a parable. There have been a good many rich men on the earth, and a good many beggars on the earth, and I do not know that any necessity was upon the Lord Jesus Christ to invent a rich man, or a beggar. A good many beggars have also been full of sores, at the gates of rich men. But, granting that we have a parable here, the Lord Jesus Christ is surely incapable of teaching error, either by the statement of a fact, or by the method of teaching called parable. In either case, the teaching is the principal thing, and in either case the teaching is true because Jesus Christ said it.

"The beggar died." Now we want to know where the beggar is. That is the question precisely. Well! beggars die now. That is not an uncommon phenomenon on this earth. Rich men also die. Death is the common fate of all mankind. Nothing remarkable about that. But what about the beggar after he died? That is what we want to know.

"And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried, and in hades he lift up his eyes, being in torment."

And as we read on, we see that the man in hades is very much alive; he carries on conversations; he has a memory; he remembers that he has relatives still living on the earth who may come to that place, and he desires that someone be sent back to the earth to warn them.

Bear in mind that I quote this passage at this time, simply in support of that first proposition: that death is neither the cessation of existence nor of consciousness. These beings—the beggar and rich man—are alike alive and alike conscious after death. We turn now to Revelation vi:9:

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"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season."

These souls then, under the altar are living; they are very conscious of whence they came, and of what is to occur on the earth; thoroughly alive; thoroughly conscious.

II. Second proposition: *Death is eternal separation between the saved and the unsaved.*

I will turn back to the xvi. chapter of Luke and read further from that passage, 26th verse:

"And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

Hear also Matthew xxv:46:

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

You know that "eternal" and "everlasting" translate the same word in the original—expressing the duration of separation. I also refer you to Revelation xxi:1-8, where the eternal abode of the saved is said to be the heavenly Jerusalem; of the lost, the lake of fire.

The very basal idea, then, concerning the condition beyond death, is: first, conscious existence; secondly, the eternal separation of the saved and the lost. Here, in this world, good and bad are mingled together. The wicked do not cease from troubling here, and the weary do not here find rest, but this mixed condition does not continue in the next world; the rule hereafter is separation—separation of the saved from the unsaved. Of course, I might bring scripture after scripture upon this point, but I pass on.

III. Third proposition: *From the moment of death, the saved are with the Lord; the unsaved in hades awaiting the judgment.*

I will read again from the xvi. chapter of Luke, necessarily the great foundation passage of all this line of truth:

"And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and in hell (hades), he lifted up his eyes, being in torments."

From this we see where the lost soul goes—immediately into hades. We shall see later on what becomes of the contents of hades. Let me read II. Corinthians v:6:

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. (For we walk by faith, not by sight.) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

There are, then, two places, so to speak, for the saved man. He may be living in the body, and so far as the personal presence of the Lord is concerned, "absent from the Lord;" or he may be absent from the body and personally present with the Lord. But there is no intermediate place. There is no waiting place. It is either in the body and not in the personal presence of the Lord (of course, always under His living eye; always in His mighty hand), or absent from the body and present with the Lord—not yet with the resurrection body, but, so far as the conscience part of man is concerned, "present with the Lord." Let me turn to II. Peter ii:9:

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

The lost are not immediately judged, but are "reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished." There is no other possible prospect before a lost soul. And that place of detention, as we know from many passages, is called

"hades," and is to be distinguished from the "lake of fire," which is the place of final punishment of the unsaved.

IV. Fourth proposition: *At the second coming of Christ, the saved receive their resurrection bodies and enter upon their eternal activities.*

The state of the saved between death and resurrection is always said in Scripture to be one of rest. Not unconsciousness, but rest. The souls under the altar cry, "How long?" They are told to rest a little while. Glorious activities await the redeemed in eternity, but they are not entered upon until the resurrection has reunited spirit, soul and body. This occurs at the second coming of Christ. I will turn now to I. Corinthians xv:22, 23.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards *they that are Christ's* at His coming."

Note this carefully, please. I do not know how there has crept into the thought of man, and somewhat into the books that men write, the idea of a simultaneous resurrection of the just and the unjust. The Scriptures never speak of one simultaneous, universal resurrection. It is expressly said that "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth," but two resurrections are immediately described. (See John v:28, 29.) Turn now to I. Thessalonians iv:15, 17:

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

At the second coming of Christ, then, when He descends from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, the dead in Christ are raised.

"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. iii:20, 21).

This passage, as you see, completes the teaching of the Thessalonian passage. The Christian dead are raised, the living Christians are changed, as to their bodies, into the likeness of the resurrection body of Jesus. Both classes, living believers and believers whose bodies are in the graves at the second advent of Christ, are in view in the well-known passage in I. Cor. xv:51, 52:

"Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

I will now read Revelation xx:4-6:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which have not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither has received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But *the rest of the dead* lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

Between the resurrection of these two are Christ's and "the rest of the dead," who are not Christ's, there intervenes, then, one thousand years of time—the millennial period.

V. Fifth proposition: *At the end of the millennium the unsaved receive their resurrected bodies, are judged, and cast into the lake of fire.*

"And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was

found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God."

As we have just seen, those who are Christ's have already been raised from among the dead, and have been reigning with Christ one thousand years. It is after "the thousand years are expired" that this great white throne is set up, and it is "the dead" who stand before God.

I once supposed that, some time, I should stand in space, with the vast throng of all who had ever lived on this earth, before that great white throne, and that the books would be opened, and that all my sins would be read out of those books, and then that another book would be opened from which it might appear that I had been saved. If the man by my side had not been saved, he would pass on into the lake of fire, and thus the eternal parting would take place. There is not a line of Scripture for this thought. No Christian stands before the great white throne. Every Christian is a glorified saint then. The passage cited from Corinthians is clear that they that are Christ's are raised at His coming, and there are left behind for the second resurrection only the bodies of the lost and the wicked dead.

"I saw the *dead*, small and great." Not the living who had been reigning with Christ one thousand years—His bride, but "the dead." Think of it! You have received your glorious body, have stood before the judgment seat of Christ as your works (not sins) passed His scrutiny, have been married to Him, have returned with Him in glory to the earth, and have been enthroned with Him; and now you are to descend from that place, and stand with the dead who have just been raised from their graves—the great mass of the wicked—to have it determined whether you are saved or not! The idea, of course, is preposterous upon its face, and, what is more, there is not a word of Scripture, nor a syllable, to support it.

But God forbid that we should study this subject in cold blood. Try to think of this scene; to realize its measureless horror—the dead standing before God! The greater part will, I believe be speechless, but some will cry out in astonishment, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works?” Poor deluded professors of religion! They trusted to religion and works rather than to Christ, and must hear Him who would have saved them say: “I never knew you.” The record, the damning record, will be there if any soul thinks to cry out against the justice of God in that awful scene. I, for one, can never read this xx chapter of Revelation without yearning over every soul that is putting off the question of salvation and staying out of Christ. You and I, oh marvel of grace! may write our names in the book of life. Think of it—is your name written there? That is the important question. Is it there?

And then we learn the result of this judgment.

“And death and hades”—the contents of them—“were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”

VI. Two questions now remain. (1) What is heaven, and why are the saved so happy there? (2) What is this lake of fire, or “Gehenna,” as it is elsewhere called, and why are the lost so wretched there? Let us look at these questions briefly in the light of Scripture.

First of all, *heaven is a place*. Get that very clearly in your minds. I used to think of it as a state of being, in a disembodied condition (perhaps here) and as a little boy I shuddered and shrank from becoming a ghost, and thought how cold and bleak and uncomfortable it must be! When I confided all this to some one, I was told that I should be an angel if I were good, and have wings and a harp. Let us get these unscriptural notions out of

our minds. Heaven is a place, a "prepared" place, which means a suited place.

"Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John xiv:1-3).

These words can convey to our minds only ideas of locality, and substantial entity. This at least, heaven is, spiritualize it as you please. On the other hand we are not to suppose that heaven is a place full of brown stone houses. That would be a very crude and fleshly conception of it. I don't know what glorified architecture is like, but I do know that the Christ who has sown this earth with flowers, and lifted it into majestic mountains, and set the continents in the tossing seas, and filled the upper air with drifting clouds and azure depths, is the same Christ whose hand is shaping the eternal love-home for His bride. "I go to prepare a *place* for you;" that is enough for me.

Turn with me now to Revelation xxi:1:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

There was no end after all, but continuity, change, development, a new heaven and a new earth.

The chief conditions of happiness in this prepared place, according to Scripture, are two. Of course the co-operant conditions are almost innumerable, but, speaking broadly, the chief conditions are two. One of them I am perfectly willing to state in the exact language of science. Herbert Spencer, the agnostic scientist, was asked what, from the scientific standpoint, would be required to make a heaven. His answer was: "A perfect being in a perfect environment." I am willing to give you that—the language of an agnostic—as expressing the heart of what the Scripture has to say about happiness in heaven.

In heaven, our bodies will be perfected into the image

of Jesus Christ (Phil. iii:21; John iii:2). Every trace of sin and infirmity and weakness, and imperfection will be left behind, and we shall be changed into the glorious fulness of the image of Jesus Christ.

Then these perfected beings will be in a perfected environment. No taint of sin there; no death; no grave; no separation, no growing old and infirm. All these things banished for ever and ever.

The other condition of the blessedness of the saint is what might be called a negative one; it is the absence of the things which make misery here. We read that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death." How perfectly so ever we might arrange an Eden here; however heavenly we might make some small portion of earth, we know that the stealthy tread of death will come there. Would it be a heaven where death is? I do not want any such heaven. I want to go to a better heaven than that.

"There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain"—mental pain or physical pain—"for the former things are passed away."

What then, to come to the last question, is the lake of fire where the lost are, and why are they wretched there?

First of all, the lake of fire is a place, just as heaven is a place. Let me read Matthew xxv:41:

"Then shall He say unto them also on His left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Men tell me sometimes they would find it very difficult to believe in a God who had prepared such a place as the lake of fire for His creatures. He never did it! He prepared that awful place "for the devil and his angels." If you go there, you will go there against the pleading of God. You will go past the cross to get there; you will go there over the dead body of God's Son. You will go there

because you resolve to go there. You will go there in spite of the fact that God has already paid the price of your redemption in the blood of His Son, and made a way of escape for you. He has taken away all the barriers that His holiness and justice might have interposed between you and heaven, and has swung wide the doors and said "Whosoever will may come." He warns you that He has prepared a place for the devil and his angels, and implores you to be saved from it.

You do not have to do anything bad to go there; just keep neglecting to be saved; that is all.

If anyone goes there these will be the conditions of wretchedness.

(1). Eternal separation from God and the good.

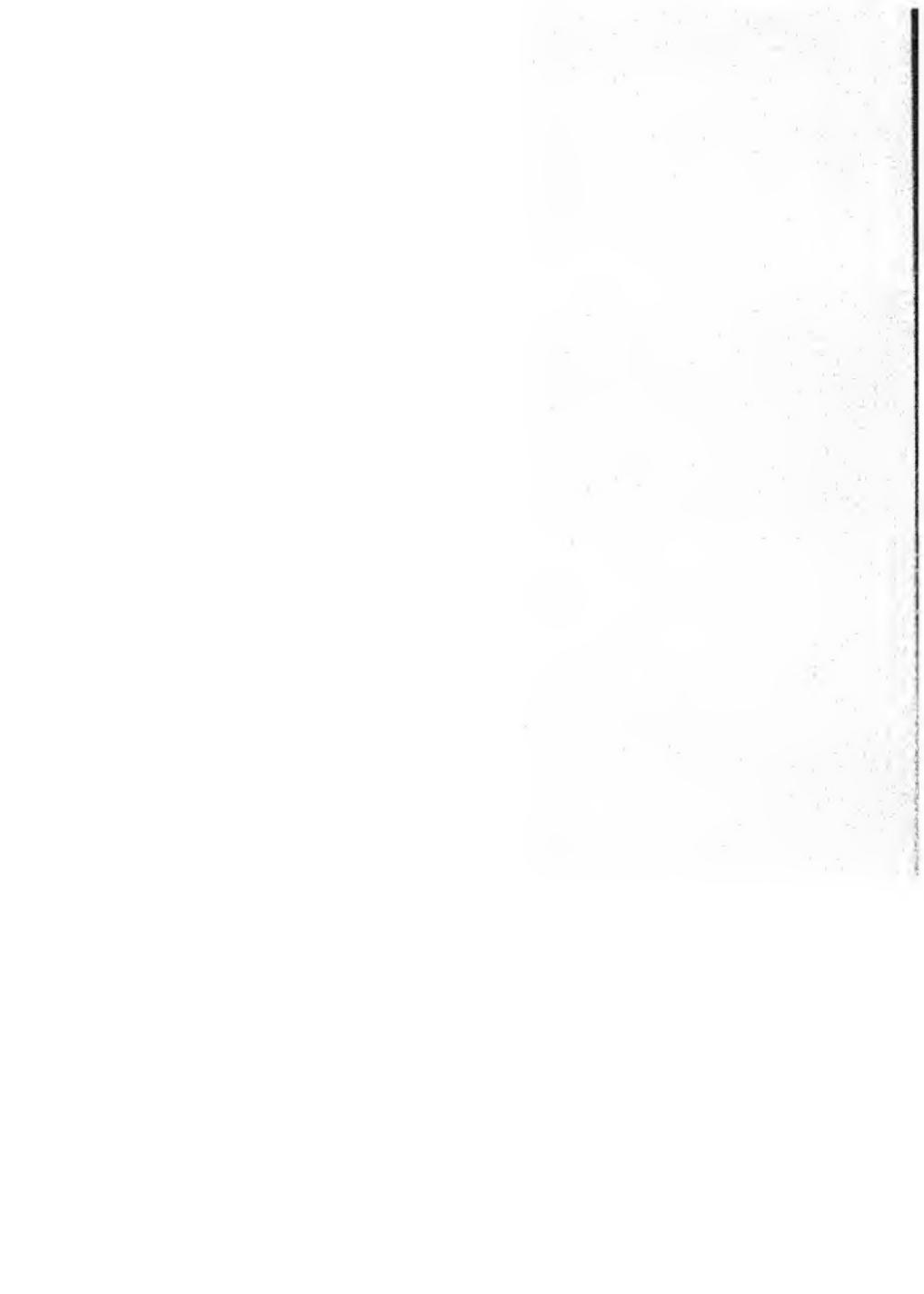
What does that mean? Do not people get on fairly well without God here? My friends, you do not get on without God a fleeting second of your lives. If God were to withhold His mercies from the wickedest man who walks this earth, he would fall into unspeakable torment at once. Every day God showers mercies upon the very men who will not have Him, and will not believe on His Son. O no, the vilest wretch, the coldest atheist, or the most immaculate moralist alive on this earth, is not without God, nor separate from God. God is filling his life with blessings every day, every one of which is designed to melt his heart and turn him to Jesus.

Some people take comfort now in saying, "Well! if we are pretty bad ourselves, we know a great many good people. They are very kind to us, and we would not like to live in a place where there are no good people." Many a man out of Christ would not have his wife out of Christ for anything in the world. He would not have his children without Christian training. I am glad of that—but think of it!

But in Hades first, and afterward in the lake of fire, there

is eternal separation from God, and from the good. It means absolute hopelessness. The most wretched man who lives on this earth has some lingering ray of hope in his heart. The soul in hell hopes for nothing. There is his heart fixed in desperate hatred of God; there is the unchanged character fixed in love of evil. Look at the character of the rich man of Luke xvi. in hades. What does he want? He wants Lazarus, the poor beggar whose life was filled with disease and suffering, sent down into his place of torment that *he* may be comforted a little. He is the same swine of selfishness that he was on earth and it is hell enough to carry that kind of a character through eternity. When he cannot get Lazarus down there with him so that, at whatever cost to Lazarus, *his* tongue may be cooled, then he wants poor Lazarus sent back to the earth that a miracle may be wrought in behalf of his wicked brothers, who have already the word of God with its warnings. Think of the hellish selfishness of those two requests. There will be no man in hell who would not tear God from His throne if he could. The black natural heart is there.

Lastly, Scripture makes it very clear that the natural emotions are there. Judas hanged himself out of remorse. Do you suppose that the remorse stopped when his life went out through the tightened noose about his neck? His remorse is yet gnawing at his heart. The man in hades remembered. He sat there in torment with memory and with consciousness. "Son, remember," said Abraham. Oh! If they could forget! What would they give if they could forget? But there is no forgetting. "Son, remember." Remember God's offer of mercy repeated again and again. Are any of you going to sit in hades some time and remember that God offered to save you to-day, that it cost Him the blood of His Son to be able righteously to make that offer, and that you said: "I will put it off a little longer?"



The rich man said: "Father Abraham, I have five brothers." Probably, he was the eldest of them, and he had lived the wrong kind of a life before them. They were on their way to hell and he had had a good deal to do with it. Think of the brothers in torment there saying, "You did it; you asked me to take my first drink; you led me into my first sin; you were an older man than I, and I thought I could do it. I saw you going into bar-rooms and other places worse than that; I thought it was smart and manly, and I went in also."

Oh, turn ye! turn ye! my unbelieving friend, why will ye die? These things are awful realties. What is the great shining message that God sends out of heaven? Listen! "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Will you have it now? Are you saying, well, what must I do? I will tell you what to do. Bow low your head with me now, and let my words be your words.

"Lord Jesus, I have sinned; I have done evil. Thou hast died for me. I take Thee for my Saviour. I trust Thee, I put my soul into Thy care. I give myself to Thee to be cleansed of sin and to be eternally saved. Amen."

